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FROM

Charles W. Eliot.

THE HYPHEN
VOLUME I.

THE HYPHEN

BY
LIDA C. SCHEM

VOLUME I.



NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

amnesty, it is true, was to be proclaimed. That amnesty would embrace those who had fought with the sword, but would exclude all who had used the pen to promulgate the monstrous theory that the people of Prussia were justified in demanding a constitutional government. The implied compliment to the smaller of the two instruments which he had wielded made him an outlaw. To be taken by the King's Guards would mean imprisonment for life. Nothing remained but flight.

Travestied as an itinerant peddler, he made his way to Switzerland. But Switzerland was not his destination—nor France, nor England. Washington, world-patriot, had been the superman whose conduct von Estritz had sought to emulate, and to the country that Washington had made came Guido von Estritz, political refugee, in 1848.

The Declaration of Independence was the apogee of human wisdom in the opinion of the young enthusiast. As a matter of course he repudiated allegiance to all foreign potentates and became an American citizen.

He possessed some talent as a violinist, and had no difficulty in securing a berth with a local orchestra. He also achieved an extraordinary popularity as a teacher of the violin, a vogue due quite as much to his striking personality as to his talent. Among his pupils was a young German-American girl, Irma Helger. Flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, docile and unquestioningly feminine, her type was uncompromisingly Teutonic, which von Estritz's was not. From forebears other than German he had inherited a pallid skin, black hair and almost Orientally luminous black eyes which turned the heads of all the girls who were his pupils. Von Estritz fell in love with pretty Irma Helger; pretty Irma Helger prostrated herself in spirit as before a god to the distinguished young aristocrat. Her father was a wealthy silk manufacturer. An indigent, fiddle-scraping son-in-law could hardly be expected to be to his liking. But the magic prefix "von" before the lover's patronymic and the name he had made for himself as an *Achtundviersiger* won old Helger's consent. He so far accommodated himself to his daughter's choice that he took his handsome son-in-law into partnership.

After fifteen years this marriage was blessed with an only child, Guido the Second, who was as like his mother

in appearance as he was like his father in character. An idealist of the purest water, he had conceived before his twentieth year the ambitious idea of consummating a Synthesis of Political Principles. The Synthesis was to be a treatise written by himself after a tour of inspection of all the countries of the world. Proceeding from the theory that every form of government embodies the experience of the race which has produced it and therefore is bound to incorporate at least a few grains of wisdom, the second Guido desired to extract what was best from each government and to present, in practical form, suggestions for a sort of multiple government whose common denominator was to be human happiness. Such a multiple government, he felt, must abolish poverty, and secure human happiness in perpetuity.

His father approved of the plan tentatively, but scenting socialism in his son's flamboyant demand for a total elimination of poverty and universal happiness, suggested that Liberty be substituted as the Common Denominator. The son protested that Liberty was too self-evident, too fundamental, too basic, to require mentioning. Every government, to insure happiness to the governed, must be reared upon the bed-rock of liberty. The generation of Washington had established that. His father asked whether it really had. The Civil War, he reminded his son, had been fought to re-establish the same issue. Without wishing to appear a prophet of evil, he feared that many more wars would have to be fought ere the great principle of liberty would be firmly established beyond reach of mishap or malice. Many more wars? How? When? Where? demanded the son. The older von Estritz looked grave. He pointed out to his son that there was Germany, Russia, sundry other less important nations—were they free?

"But Germany has a constitution now, hasn't she?" the son demanded.

"Read it some day and see whether she really has," was the paradoxical reply of the father.

The elder von Estritz died at the close of a cruelly hot day as a result of heart failure, before the son had had a chance to report on the suggested reading. The son was heart-broken. His mother had died when he was a lad

of ten, his grandparents he barely remembered. He was without kith or kin in the world save only those Prussian cousins who had cast off his father as a pariah for espousing the plebeian cause of liberty.

He finished his course at college and devoted eight or nine years to the silk mills, a sorry occupation for a man with a Synthesis of Political Principles germinating in his head. His leisure time he devoted to the study of modern language, his mastery of which—particularly of Russian—was destined, later on, to stand him in excellent stead. One day his chance came to dispose of the mills. He sold them at a good round sum and began his tour of the world.

England, democracy in all but name, was the first foreign country he visited. He was too young and perhaps not quite big-minded enough to deal comprehendingly with the daily stain of Ireland upon the English page. Also, he was American taught and the story of the Revolution was not forgotten. He was neither as well-poised nor as well-trained a thinker as his father had been. And his father's race was strong in him, stronger than it had been in his father. He went to Germany next. The well-ordered life, flowing along smoothly and fluently as on ball-bearings, caught his imagination. He liked the clean, decent streets, the well-fed appearance of the population, the paternal nature of some of the Imperial decrees. He had the good luck to be present at one of the autumn maneuvers, and became a violent admirer and apologist of the German Army. He lacked the penetration to apprehend that beneath the glittering surface lurked the deadly menace of the caste system, toward the strengthening of which all currents—military, governmental and educational—were tending. He forgot the discrepancies and hypocrisies of the German Constitution at which his father had glanced in his immortal paradox. He forgot his father's suggestion that he use Liberty as the Common Denominator with which to test his Synthesis. Was not happiness enough—or better? In confounding happiness with creature contentment, he made a not uncommon error.

Having become a frantic Germanophile, his quest for the Synthesis was virtually ended before it was well begun. However, an instinct that to keep faith with oneself is as

essential as to keep faith with others, held him to his search.

He had made many delightful friends in Germany, and he unduly prolonged his sojourn there. The friend whom he prized most highly, who, indeed, seemed to him the very incarnation of all that friendship should be, was a woman several years his senior.

Ursula von Wendt was not a beautiful woman, although she usually passed as such, for coloring and complexion were perfect, and she had a superabundance of vitality and charm, two great assets of personality which never fail of effect. She was delicately modeled, very delicately for a daughter of a race which usually molds its women into undue corpulence or inelegant gauntness. Her hair of mellow gold lay about her head in a heavy coil, giving the impression of a brow banded by a wreath, say of laurel. This singular coiffure emphasized the patrician lines of her face, the nose, which narrowly escaped being large, the firm, kind mouth, the finely chiseled determined chin. Her complexion was brilliantly white and shell-pink and her eyes blue as the corn-flowers which grow among the wheat in German fields.

Ursula von Wendt passed as a widow among her Berlin acquaintances, but one day, in a burst of confidence, she told Guido von Estritz that she was a divorcee. She had been married by her parents when very young to a *Rittergutsbesitzer* in Mecklenburg. Mecklenburg was at this time unique among the petty principalities, dukedoms, kingdoms and republics which constitute the German Empire, in having no constitution whatever. The entire management of Mecklenburg's internal affairs still smacked strongly of feudalism. Thus, in his capacity of *Rittergutsbesitzer* (Lord Knight of the Domain), her husband exercised a virtually unrestricted power over the peasants of his estate. He was a harsh man and ruled the men and women who were serfs in all but name with a rod of iron. It was no uncommon occurrence for an unfortunate peasant found guilty of poaching to be condemned to thirty days' imprisonment in the *Kerker* under the great courtyard of the castle. The function of magistrate accrued to him, and as it was not deemed improper in this antiquated community that a man should appear in the same

case both as plaintiff and as judge, a peasant who had incurred the displeasure of the Lord Knight had no chance whatever of escaping severe punishment.

One day a very old woman was guilty of the heinous offense of taking some twigs and branches from the preserves of the estate for kindling wood. She was condemned to spend ten days in the ill-ventilated and unlighted *Kerker*. In vain the young wife of the *Rittergutsbesitzer* protested against the inhumanity of shutting up a woman of eighty in a dungeon barren of every comfort and every decency and lapt in perpetual darkness. Her husband's will prevailed. At the end of five days the "thief" fell violently ill with dysentery. She was removed to the hospital where she died of enteric fever a few days later.

This incident made such a cruel impression upon the sensitive mind of the young wife that she left her husband. She had never loved him. Now she both despised and abhorred him. Failing in his endeavors to persuade her to return to him, he divorced her.

After her divorce, her parents refused to have anything to do with her. What else could perfectly respectable parents be expected to do? Fortunately she had a small independent income of her own. She moved to Berlin, and lived the quiet, retired life of a recluse among her flowers and her books.

Such was the history of Ursula von Wendt.

Guido von Estritz had not the remotest suspicion of the truth. This woman, still young and more than ordinarily attractive and intelligent, had fallen violently in love with him. She had been married off by her parents before understanding the nature and the function of love. Her husband had filled her with spiritual horror and physical loathing and after her divorce she shrank away from the world of men with a fixed determination to keep clear of all entanglements.

Guido von Estritz, appearing unexpectedly on the narrow stage of her life, seemed to her like the harbinger of a superior race. All the men with whom she had mingled heretofore were officers, *Gutsbesitzer*, gentlemen by birth and by profession. For the first time in her life she was thrown into contact with a man who was not an avowed materialist. He confided to her his Quest of the Synthesis.

Only dimly apprehending, she applauded. In spirit she laid herself in the dust at his feet. She idealized him. Because he was a spiritual-minded man, she saw in him a manifestation of pure spirit, and she construed his failure to pay her womanhood the supreme tribute as a further confirmation of his unfleshy nature. Thus do some women idealize and idolize the man of their choice. Perhaps they feel love to be so monstrous a reversal of every dictate of decorum and propriety that, to make love tenable at all, they invest the man whom they love with the attributes of a superman. For must not poor human frailty, lodging in the breast of woman, be pardoned for capitulating to a demi-god?

Although Ursula von Wendt failed to evoke the romantic passion in the second Guido, the young German-American was tremendously fascinated by this kindly, high-bred gentlewoman. She was the soul of honor. She seemed to radiate goodness and integrity. The young man thought he had never seen those two jewels shine with so serene and steadfast a light.

Perhaps if he had guessed the tumult in that gentle heart for which he was responsible, a like tumult would have been engendered in his own, for love begets love; and this history would never have been written.

As it was, he bade Frau Ursula adieu one fine morning with a blithe cheerfulness, little guessing what sharp lacerations she was suffering as she smiled gently upon him and wished him Godspeed.

His quest for the Synthesis next took him to Russia—perfunctorily—for had he not discovered in Germany the fount of all governmental wisdom? He found Russia interesting, alluring and contradictory. In Russia, also, fate tracked him down in the person of Varvara Alexandrovna Vasalov.

The Princess Vasalov was distantly related to the house of Romanov. Born and bred as the heiress of a vast estate, she had eschewed luxury and splendor, and almost from childhood had devoted herself to mitigating the suffering of her father's peasants. The contrasts between the almost royal opulence which abounded in her father's house and the dire distress—a distress sharpened to the starvation point during the greater part of the year—

which held the peasants in its ruthless grip, struck her even as a child. There were times when she resolutely refused to eat the dainty food set before her because some of her father's dependants were without bread. Her father had her soundly flogged, deeming flogging a cure for compassion, but her pity was fed by that which was to elide it. Corporal punishment failing of the desired effect, Prince Vasalov packed the youthful delinquent off to St. Petersburg, hoping that in the house of his sister, about whom gravitated a fashionable set of wits and esthetes, his daughter would forget the vice of practicing mercy.

The young girl had learned her lesson. She dissimulated. She pretended to be delighted with the round of pleasures in which she, although much too young, was permitted to join. Clandestinely and at night she led her real life, the life of which her daytimes and evenings were mere frivolous shadows. Although only fifteen years of age, she joined the Radical Socialistic Party, and the man who introduced her to this Party, and to the sinister work which it had in hand, was her cousin, Dmitri Stepanovich Vasalov.

These two, Dmitri Stepanovich and Varvara Alexandrovna, were destined to become the terror and the despair of the Police. They were known throughout the length and the breadth of Russia as "The Little Cousins." To cloak their conspiratorial activities they kept in sedulous touch with fashionable life, a circumstance which also furthered their work through placing at their disposal information unobtainable from any other strata of society. The Police suspected them for years, but lacking proof positive dared not, because of their high rank, hurl an accusation against them.

Guido von Estritz met Varvara Alexandrovna at a fashionable supper. Life is full of repetitions which, however banal and trivial to the onlooker, are exquisite and unique to those to whom they come with the freshness and the insouciance of spring. These two, the blond German-American, as respectable and conventional-minded as any bourgeois, and the dark Russian, with a face like a flower and a soul like a shining sword, fell in love with each other at first sight.

She resisted his wooing—of course. He was regaled to repletion with the phrases which fall from the lips of all high-spirited girls, and which wary lovers regard as mere feminine embellishments of the immortal theme. She would never marry. She had work to do. Work the most urgent and important. He demanded to be told the nature of her work. She regarded him curiously, wondering whether his love would survive if she answered him truthfully. He repeated his question, adding, "Do you wish to become a writer? An artist? A musician?"

This was so naïve that Varvara Alexandrovna laughed outright. She assured him that she would never write a novel, paint a picture or compose a serenade.

"Then what?" he demanded.

"I said 'important work,' dearest. What are the most important things in the world?"

"The most important—love."

"To lovers, yes. But to everybody—to young and old—rich and poor?"

"Life," he said, realizing that this was not a time for pretty philandering. "And death."

"That is my work," the girl said, quietly. "Life and death. I mete out death to a few that many may live."

There was in his eyes no flash of comprehension. His conception of the Synthesis was not elastic enough to embrace anarchism. It existed, as he knew, but it did not enter into his scheme of things.

She realized that she must speak more crudely.

"My work," she said, "is assassination. I am a secret member of the Radical Socialistic Party, and we practice terrorism to stamp out terrorism."

Followed a stressful half of an hour. He began it by telling her bluntly that it was impossible for her to be that which she was. She a Lucrezia Borgia, a Catherine de Medici—impossible!

She interrupted him.

"You mistake," she said, gently. "We are of the race of Charlotte Corday."

"But murder! Poison! Bombs! The stiletto!" He remembered a melodrama which he and a friend had seen in an East Side theater, and which had struck him as a huge joke. He was revolted. It was, of course, pre-

posterous to connect this human flower with the mechanism of violent death. He had an inspiration.

"You've never taken an active part——" he declared, vehemently. "Surely, you have only arranged things, pulled the wires, as we say in America——"

"Allow others to do what I would not do myself!" she exclaimed, scornfully. "I have three assassinations to my credit now. Before we are a month older, if all goes well, there will be a fourth."

Her lover shivered. That this should have happened to him, of all men!

"Why not attempt peaceful reforms—interest people by distributing printed propaganda?"

"We do that, of course. They send us to Siberia for that as well as for assassination, if we are found out."

"Why not appeal to those in power?" he suggested, faintly.

"To appeal to those in power is high treason," she said. "Siberia is the remedy for that, also."

"Arguments with people of your own class——"

Varvara Alexandrovna laughed bitterly. Stripping back her loose sleeve, she revealed an ugly, deep scar which ran down from her shoulder almost to the elbow.

"That," she said, quietly, "was my own father's answer to my 'arguments.' Poor man! I do not blame him. He hoped that blows, administered in time, might save me from Siberia. He was mistaken. Siberia is my goal and nothing can save me from it."

Guido von Estritz had turned very white. His voice was hushed and strained, as he said:

"You have suffered enough. Do not invite martyrdom."

"It is because I, like others of my class, have not suffered at all that I must be a martyr," she said, darkly. "Some day, if you remain with us long enough, you will stumble into some snag of Russian life which will convince you that my party is right. And then you will come to me and beg me to be permitted to throw the next bomb."

"Never! I believe in peaceful methods—in evolution, not revolution."

"Peaceful methods!" she exclaimed, scornfully. "Time was when you had a revolution of your own. That was a long time ago. Ours may be long in coming. But it must

come. It will come. No country ever struck off its fetters without a revolution."

"Instead of 'peaceful' methods, I should have said 'legitimate' methods," said her lover, humbly.

"Legitimate——" the girl laughed. "That's delicious. Legitimate methods of fighting the Russian government. Why, dearest, that is precisely what we are fighting for—for legitimate methods, and so long as they are withheld we must fight from ambush—wage guerrilla warfare with bomb and knife!"

How would all this fit into the Synthesis? Guido von Estritz was an ardent lover and wooer, but he was also a student of political science. Large beads of perspiration stood on his brow. He foresaw the defeat both of lover and student. He resumed urging his suit. He told her of the Synthesis. She applauded the idea, appending that theories shall profit humanity little so long as so much practical work remains to be done.

"Marry me!" he cried, her dark beauty suddenly smiting him with all a lover's anguish. "Come with me to America—where all are free."

"Never," she said. "That is why the Old World lies sick unto death. The fiery spirits embrace the easiest way to freedom—to comparative freedom—and emigrate to America. I will not desert my post. I will fight, fight, fight and kill, kill, kill until I'm caught and shipped to Siberia or until I've accomplished our revolution."

"But," pleaded the man, "is love to have no share in your life?"

"Ah, love!" she said, smiling a wise, sad, wan little smile.

He took her hand and kissed it passionately. His heart was too full for utterance. His profound agitation pled for him as no word could have done. There was a gentleness about this blond, philosophical, moral lover of hers that drew all her fire and flame into his orbit. It aroused subtler emotions as well. She was now nineteen years old, and the maternal instinct, in which she was rich, had hitherto been lavished so generously upon all the children of men that it had become diffuse and vagrant. The man's unexpressed passion gave it focus and point.

"I cannot marry you," she said, impulsively, "because a man's wife and the children she bears him belong to

him. They must live his life, whatever that may be. And I am condemned to live in perpetual jeopardy. But I love you, and I have a right to my love and to yours. Therefore—take me! But our child must belong to me and to the Cause!”

He shrank back as if she had struck him in the face. Was this lasciviousness? Or a momentary lapse from virtue? He was a gallant gentleman and she the last woman in the world whom he would have harmed. Presently a whole world of intuitions came flashing upon him. Moral, immoral or unmoral, her courage was magnificent! How insignificant a thing was the Synthesis compared with this? Thought was to have been his medium. Human flesh and human spirit were to be hers. He was overwhelmed. He might have been swayed by her more volcanic temperament, but he also had the parental instinct. That saved him. No child of his should be predestined to martyrdom.

Her prophecy had been correct. Before another week had elapsed, Tersehogen, Chief of Police of a neighboring city, was assassinated. There was a traitor among the conspirators. Varvara Alexandrovna had gambled with Siberia once too often. Within twenty-four hours after the throwing of the bomb, the Princess Vasalov was arrested for the murder of Tersehogen. She languished in prison for two years. In vain her frantic lover sought to secure her pardon. Finally, after a perfunctory trial, she was sentenced to Siberia for ten years.

Guido von Estritz moved heaven and earth to save the woman he loved from her horrible fate. He invoked the aid of the American Minister in St. Petersburg, who gave him what letters of introduction he could. The prospective author of the Synthesis saw functionaries of state, of the law, of the police. Without avail. Varvara Alexandrovna had been a thorn in the flesh of the Powers that be too long. To Siberia she must go.

Did she regret having elected exile in Siberia to wifehood in America? Who shall say? Von Estritz came to see her in prison as often as he had a ray of hope to hold out to her. But he was not there to bid her farewell when, at dawn, one morning, she and a dozen other women convicts clad in the coarse gray linen shirt and skirt, the

unshapely black slippers, the long gray overcoat with the hideous yellow patch on the back of which the dress of a convict consists, were led out of the dismal prison to the dirty train in which they were to begin their long journey.

Prisons and railroad cars, all alike ill-ventilated, dirty and unheated, followed each other in rapid succession. The monotony of these repetitions was varied only by long cruel tramps over snow-clad roads. Varvara Alexandrovna's footgear was inadequate. The snow soaked through it. The rough stones of the road tore it. Her feet, frost-bitten and bleeding, were an incessant torture, an almost unendurable torment.

An itinerant peddler of the Gospels and Tracts, his heavy wooden box slung by a strap across his shoulders, who was traveling in the same direction as the convicts and had asked permission of the guard to join the party, took pity on her and bought her a pair of fleece-lined boots, which he handed her, bowing obsequiously, for the common people of Russia feel a respect verging on veneration for "politicals." This kindness on the part of a man who himself was desperately poor, touched the unhappy woman deeply.

Villagers also showed them kindness by feeding them and giving them warm undergarments. One old peasant, moved by the youth and the beauty of Varvara Alexandrovna and several other women convicts, asked permission of their guards to drive them in his ox-cart to the town where they were to entrain. When they reached their destination, the man produced small loaves of bread which he distributed among the convicts. Varvara Alexandrovna, upon receiving her loaf, perceived that a tiny scroll of paper protruded from the side of the bread. She pulled it out and secreted it in the high boots which the peddler had given her until she had a chance to read it. The paper contained one line only: "Be of good cheer. Guido."

After that her courage never flagged. The others wondered at her unflinching fortitude in the face of almost insufferable hardships.

One by one the other exiles dropped off to be taken to their respective villages. The itinerant peddler also left them. Verkoyansk, Varvara Alexandrovna's destination, was too far north for a poor vender of Holy Pictures and Gospels, so he told the Guard in Varvara Alexandrovna's

presence, asking leave, at the same time, to present her with a small Testament. She did not offer to pay him, fearing to offend him. What was her amazement, on opening the book, to find that it had a pocket pasted against the lower inside cover, which contained a thousand roubles in small bills. Varvara Alexandrovna's heart almost stopped beating with joy. Had the peddler been an agent sent by Guido, or had he been Guido himself? She could not tell. She contented herself in patience, knowing that she was not forsaken by the man she loved more passionately and more tenderly than ever.

For the last ten days Varvara Alexandrovna traveled alone with the Guard. At sunset one evening in October he delivered her to the *Storosta* at Verkoyansk for safe-keeping.

When the inhabitants of the village heard that their "political" was an educated woman and could cipher and read and write, their joy knew no bounds. The principal shopkeeper of the little settlement had recently lost his bookkeeper, and as the entire community had depended upon this clerk to read and write their letters, and to keep them posted on news from the outside world by reading the newspapers to them, his death had caused something like consternation throughout the town. Varvara Alexandrovna thus found herself with an occupation before she knew where she was to lay her head that night.

The pope—the village priest—who had a large family of children, offered to take her in. His wife was an illiterate woman, but she was clean, kindly and good-tempered. Varvara Alexandrovna considered herself fortunate.

Autumn drifted into winter, bringing her work and pay but no word from her lover. What had become of him? Why had he left her after following her so far? Did he intend to come to her in spring, after making all arrangements for her escape? The virtually unguarded condition in which she was allowed to roam at large would make escape comparatively easy. Once or twice she accompanied the pope's wife to neighboring villages, and occasionally she accompanied the shopkeeper on short business expeditions which required her services as scribe. She thus became familiar with the nearby topography. She was earn-

ing all she needed for her support. She had left the pope's house after a few weeks, renting a small cabin quite near the shop where she spent most of her time. The Russian government allows its exiles a small sum for their upkeep. The villagers kept her in food and in fuel in return for her letter-writing and newspaper-reading, and the shopkeeper paid her fairly well for her services. Russia does not allow her exiles to follow former avocations in Siberia, but as Varvara Alexandrovna's pursuits had been those of revolutionist and society belle, the shopkeeper argued that he was transgressing no law in employing the "political" with whom Heaven had blessed his village.

She was thus, in a small way, quite prosperous. The thousand roubles remained where she had found them in the pocket of the cover of the little Testament. She decided to save what money she could in addition through the winter, and if Guido did not return before spring, she was determined to make a dash for liberty in April or early in May. All winter the temperature was below the freezing point of mercury. It was impossible for anyone to attempt a long journey before spring.

Her greatest anxiety was caused by the necessity of passports. How to attain them unaided she did not know.

Her hour of deliverance was closer at hand than she knew.

One day in March, from her window in the shop, she saw all the women in the village flocking down the street. She left her desk, and wrapping her shawl about her shoulders, stepped outside the door.

"Hurry, Varvara Alexandrovna," one of the women called to her, "a merchant has come with jewelry—such jewelry! And so cheap. See, yonder he stands, near the chapel."

Varvara Alexandrovna's heart began to beat violently. Looking in the direction indicated, she recognized the itinerant peddler who had bought her the fleece-lined boots. Was it Guido himself? She could hardly believe it. The disguise was so perfect.

"Jewelry," he was saying, "jewelry, and so cheap! My home is thirty miles away and I must close out because my wife is dying. I saw her in a vision. Jewelry! And one or two tracts!"

"Let me see the tracts!" said Varvara Alexandrovna. She was so excited that she could barely speak, for she had recognized Guido von Estritz's voice. While under surveillance of the guards, he had travestied his voice as well as his appearance, but now he had spoken naturally.

He handed her the tract, open at the fly-leaf, across which was written: "Give no sign that you recognize me. I did not dare follow before because I feared to arouse suspicion. I have everything—money, a guide, a relay of sleighs along the entire route. Also the necessary passports. Meet me to-morrow night at eleven, thirty rods down the road from the last house. Guido."

In the tumultuous onrush of emotions that followed the reading of this message, Varvara Alexandrovna neither paid for the tract nor returned it. The women were too engrossed in paying five, ten, fifteen or twenty kopeks for the cheap brass "jewelry" to notice her defection.

The escape was effected as planned. Guido had arranged for every detail. Relays waited for them in every village, and they traveled by day and night until they arrived at Irkutsk, from whence they continued their travels by rail. Varvara Alexandrovna would fain have lingered in St. Petersburg to obtain news of her cousin Dmitri Stepanovich, but Guido would not brook an hour's delay. He fell ill soon after they left St. Petersburg, but although he suffered racking pains in the chest and throat, he refused to tarry, and pressed on. Finally they crossed the German frontier. Von Estritz was so ill by this time that he had to be carried from the railroad depot to the hotel, and months elapsed before he recovered from the effects of his pleurisy and pneumonia.

Not a word had been said all this time about marriage. At first Varvara Alexandrovna ascribed her lover's strange diffidence in renewing his suit to a sense of delicacy. She conceived that having rendered her the tremendous service of rescuing her, he did not care to exact payment by claiming her hand. Presently, however, a subtler interpretation of his motive in preserving silence dawned upon her. She saw Guido's physician privately, and implored him to tell her the truth. She had some difficulty in extracting it.

"There's no immediate danger," the doctor replied evasively.

"That means that there is danger, doesn't it?" she queried.

"Madame," retorted the physician, "we must all die. He may outlive you."

"How long do you give him?" the woman demanded, bluntly.

The doctor regarded her curiously.

"Tell me the truth," she begged.

"With care, cheerful surroundings, happiness and the right climate he may live three years more. Possibly four. No longer. He must have suffered prolonged exposure last winter in very severe cold."

Varvara Alexandrovna nodded.

"He froze the tips of his lungs," the doctor continued. "When the warmer weather came pleurisy and pneumonia set in. For some reason he neglected himself, and now he must pay the piper as all of us must who defy the laws of nature."

"Does he know?"

"I have not told him."

"Then don't—for the present."

The doctor looked at her curiously. He nodded comprehendingly.

"Very well," he said.

Varvara Alexandrovna was typical of the women of her race. She was passionate and tender-hearted, yet she rarely allowed herself to be swayed by anything but reason. She mistrusted all instincts excepting the instinct of patriotism. Other instincts she held to be instincts of the flesh. Patriotism alone was an instinct of the soul. This deep-rooted conviction had been the source of her strength in turning away from love and dedicating herself anew to her "Cause." She was a woman who, had she fallen in love with a tyrant, would have assassinated him as cheerfully as if he had aroused in her no instinct save that of contempt.

She now found herself confronted by a situation infinitely more delicate. Gratitude and love pulled her in one direction. Duty pointed in another. Presently, by clever manipulations of the unknown quantities in this algebraic problem, she had lined up duty alongside the two other

factors. There was no possibility of standing out against such a mathematical preponderance.

That very evening she approached Guido von Estritz on the subject.

"Dearest," she said, "you risked your life and abandoned your life-work to rescue me. I cannot doubt your love. Why do you not ask me to marry you?"

"You rejected me before," von Estritz replied, speaking with great deliberation. "I have no reason to suppose that you have changed your mind about certain aspects of marriage. It is probably your desire to remain a free agent."

"I am a free agent no longer," Varvara Alexandrovna replied. "There's a price upon my head. Were I re-taken now, they would sentence me to solitary confinement."

"You mean—you are willing to abandon Russia?" her lover demanded, incredulously.

"There is nothing else to do," she replied. "If we marry, we may have a daughter who will take up my work where I have laid it down."

"If we marry," said the man, "we may have a son who will carry on my labor where it has dropped from me."

They stared at each other, glowingly conscious that the same thought was germinating simultaneously in both their minds. He saw in Germany the apotheosis of government, and detested the anarchic trend of Russia. She contended that anarchistic socialism—a complete non-interference with the individual—was the highest type of government, being no government at all. She loathed the pseudo-socialism and pseudo-freedom of Germany as much as he—calling it by another name—adored it.

This mutual thought of theirs, as quickly as it was born, became an obsession.

A child, born of spiritual natures so conflicting and divergent, would be wiser than they, must be predestined to discover the Golden Mean, would, by the very essence of his nature, solve the problem of the Political Synthesis! Neither perceived the sublime absurdity of expecting two utterly dissimilar and opposing currents to unite themselves in a third person and hereafter to flow as one.

Now they understood—or thought they did—why the centuries had conspired for this moment. Everything that had befallen—her exile, their flight, Guido's illness—had

been propitious, had been a fortuitous preparation for this supreme moment. Their love was to be no mere vulgar gratification of self. It was to be the solvent of all the ills of humanity. Their babe, as yet unborn and unbegotten, was to be the legislative regenerator of mankind.

Ludicrous folly or divine wisdom? If motive counts for anything, then the element of divinity was not lacking in their fantastic hope. There was in their ambition for a politically eugenic babe nothing pretentious or vainglorious. There was almost humility in their conception of themselves as two vessels which were to pass on the electric charge of life in a clarified, intensified, resurrected form! They were willing to repeat the sacrifice of Isaac. They were offering their conjoined flesh and spirit to the Divine Being for experimental purposes.

They were married quietly the next week. The following winter they spent in Italy. But von Estritz's cough did not improve, and when spring came, bringing with it the expectation of a child, the young husband longed for home—for Old Glory and the U. S. A. His wife was amazed. He had expressed such love and admiration for Germany and German institutions that she had come to regard her husband as a spiritual expatriate. She was, however, entirely satisfied to have her child born on American soil. It was neutral ground. Accordingly they sailed for New York early in summer.

Women there are who prepare spiritually for the advent of their offspring by surrounding themselves with beautiful pictures, scriptural passages, sweet music. The von Estritzes prepared for the coming of the Synthetic Babe by talking political economy. Varvara Alexandrovna had every desire to play fair with her husband in dowering the child. They talked endlessly of Russia and Germany, forgetting apparently that in addition to those two extreme tendencies there was a host of other intermediate forms of government.

The little lad whose coming had been looked for by his parents as a world-shaking event was born in January. He was a frail, weak little creature, and it was doubtful at first whether he would survive. But the hopes of his parents were not to be dashed. He lived, although he remained weak and ailing. His parents reminded each other

that some of the world's greatest men had been exceedingly frail in childhood. There was Napoleon; there was Alexander Hamilton; there was Alexander Pope, the Wasp of Twickenham.

"Our son shall be the Wasp of Russia," said the child's mother.

"Our son shall be the Wasp of the World," said the child's father.

"It comes to the same," said Varvara Alexandrovna. "Russia shall regenerate the world. It is her mission. It is our son's mission. Russia's mission and our son's are identical.

Von Estritz died the following June. He had been too ill to carry through an investigation which he had begun regarding the exact status of his wife. As the wife of an American, she, of course, automatically changed her nationality from Russian to American. But she was guilty of four assassinations. It was an open question whether, under the existing extradition treaties, Russia might not at any time claim her, or at least, whether on re-entering Russia Varvara Alexandrovna was not liable to arrest.

The young widow decided to take up the investigation where her husband had dropped it. She went to Geneva the following autumn with her little son, the third Guido, and their pursued her inquiries. A former friend of her family, a Russian of high birth and considerable social prestige, who was returning to Russia, offered to act as her mediator. Months elapsed. Then the Russian noble returned with glad tidings. The Czar had pardoned his distant kinswoman.

There was, consequently, nothing to debar Varvara Alexandrovna from returning to Russia. The agreement between husband and wife regarding their son's education had been as unique as the rest of their story. The boy was to be educated alternately in Germany and in Russia—providing that Varvara Alexandrovna might re-enter the land of her birth without courting re-imprisonment—in rotating periods of from three to four years. Madame von Estritz chose to begin her son's education in her own country. She wished his infant impressions to be received in Holy Russia.

A terrible surprise awaited her. At the fourth railroad

station at which her train stopped after entering Russia, several Cossacks boarded the train and arrested her. In vain she protested. In vain she told them that she was an American citizen. The Russian nobleman had been a spy and the Czar's pardon pure fiction and a decoy to lure her across the border. She and her babe were roughly dragged from the train and shut up in a filthy cell in the local prison.

She bribed the jailer to mail a letter for her to the American Consul. The man accepted the money and the letter but never mailed the latter. As the days went by, without bringing the expected relief, Varvara Alexandrovna verged on madness. She herself had endured worse things—but was the legislative regeneration of humanity to be brought to nought through the untimely death of her babe? The mother instinct became rampant. The cell swarmed with vermin of every description. It was impossible to obtain warm water to bathe the child. But she had no soap to wash his garments properly. Her greatest vigilance failed to keep his wasted body free from body-lice. The child cried incessantly. She dared not leave him out of her arm for a moment at night for fear that a rat might attack him.

One day, when she had laid the child down to wash out some linen, a rat did attack the infant. The jailer happened to enter the cell at the moment. He was not destitute of humanity. Seeing the rat on the baby's back he struck at the rodent with a heavy stick. The rat sprang aside, and the stick struck full force upon the child's spine. The man, overcome with grief at this untoward result of his intended kindness, prevailed upon a young physician to come and attend the child. The young doctor told Varvara Alexandrovna frankly that the child's back had been cruelly injured, and that the child would be crippled ✓ if he did not receive proper medical attention and nursing. He was a humane young man, and almost wept with pity at the plight of the unfortunate woman and her child. But he was a Jew, and was greatly disliked because of his race and therefore was unable to help her in any way.

Varvara Alexandrovna, after that, was tempted to strangle her babe. She ran the entire gamut of human suffering in the dark days that followed. But what she

had done in hatred she could not do in love. She could not kill her own flesh and blood.

In her extremity she bethought herself of Ursula von Wendt, the German friend of her husband of whom he had spoken with such affection and with whom he had corresponded to the day of his death.

Her woman's prescience told her that this woman had loved her husband. Good she knew her to be from her husband's description and from the tenor of her letters. She divined furthermore that a woman might at first harden her heart against the child of the man she had loved because it was not her own, but that ultimately she must love it because it was his.

Varvara Alexandrovna wrote Frau Ursula. The jailer, still conscience-stricken, mailed the letter. Frau Ursula, on receiving the heart-broken appeal, lost not a minute's time. She was eating her dinner when Madame von Estritz's letter was handed her. She did not wait to finish her meal, but hastily packed a small bag and got herself into traveling gear. She had that day drawn her quarterly allowance, so she was well supplied with funds.

The meeting that took place between the two women who had so passionately loved the same man was one to touch the imagination. Without speaking, Varvara Alexandrovna drew her visitor to a corner of the cell where a little light filtered through a grating. Without a word she showed Frau Ursula the child's bruised back, the flea-bites which disfigured his face, the uncared-for little body. Then, still silent, she laid the child in Frau Ursula's arms.

Frau Ursula was appalled. In spite of Varvara Alexandrovna's frantic letter, she had not been prepared to see what she saw. She had taken it for granted—as adoring women will—that the child would be a miniature presentment of his father. The black-haired, black-eyed, emaciated, cadaverous little wretch, who wailed incessantly, was not the blue-eyed, fair-haired baby of which she had dreamed. But the horror of the situation, and the distress of the whining, puny infant, were too cruelly real to admit of sentimental repining. Ursula von Wendt, in a sudden access of divine pity, pressed the babe to her heart and kissed the wasted, unlovely little cheek.

"You will take him—care for him?" Madame von Estritz demanded in her broken German.

Frau Ursula nodded. She could not speak. Her throat was rigid.

"I have bribed the jailer," Varvara Alexandrovna continued, "he will pretend not to see the baby when you take him away."

"But for you also," said Ursula von Wendt, speaking for the first time, "something must be done. The American Consul should be notified."

Varvara Alexandrovna shook her head in violent negation. A fortnight ago she would have been willing and eager to obtain her liberty on any plea. Now, after the crowning inhumanity to which her babe had been subjected, she had only one idea—to fight, to fight, to fight! Siberia? She had escaped once with her husband's aid. She would escape again. Solitary confinement? She would escape on the way. Her soul was like a flaming torch—the thought of failure was inadmissible. And after her escape she would preach such sermons as had never been heard since the world began. She would preach openly, eschewing henceforth all secret methods. The very high priests of the iniquitous Russian police system would turn converts to the Cause. She would set all Russia aflame.

Frau Ursula listened to the passionate outburst and marveled. Did this woman really love her child? She could not doubt it, since her wild words were caused by her outraged maternal instincts. Also she remembered that frenzied letter of appeal which had brought her hot-haste to Russia. Ursula von Wendt had felt, in laying it away among the heliotrope-scented handkerchiefs of her orderly top bureau drawer, as if she were laying away a crushed and bleeding human heart.

And so the strange bargain was made between the two women who until this hour had been strangers and who, temperamentally, were the very antithesis of each other.

Frau Ursula, showing unwonted energy, contrived to interest both the German and the American Consul in the case. Innumerable documents were drawn up—affidavits, power of attorneys, letters of introduction. At the end of a few days, Varvara Alexandrovna, as executor of her husband's large fortune, had instructed her attorneys in

New York to administer the estate for her son until his coming of age. The annual income was to be handed over to Frau Ursula, who was also to receive outright a gift of fifty thousand dollars. Privately she acquainted Frau Ursula with the circumstances and hopes governing little Guido's birth. Frau Ursula had never heard of a synthetic baby before, and would have thought the entire yarn the wildest farrago of nonsense she had ever heard if the man whom she had loved and revered had not had part in it.

Meanwhile the American Consul, a small, dapper man of no great ability, was floundering about in a sea of doubt. He was not quite certain what course to pursue. His colleague, the German Consul, urged him strongly to communicate the story to the American Minister at St. Petersburg. That was all very well, but the American Consul was not a trouble-hunter. Since the woman herself begged him not to advance her claims as an American citizen, what was he to do? Murder was murder the world over, and the young widow shamelessly and unrepentantly admitted four assassinations. Russia, in his opinion, no matter what discriminations international law might make in favor of political murders, was absolutely right in indicting this beautiful young creature. Now, if she had killed a man who had betrayed her, she would have elicited his complete sympathy, and he would have felt no compunction in dragging in the United States in the hopes of saving her. But what in thunder did a young girl reared in the lap of refinement and luxury mean by going and killing four men whom, confessedly, she had never clapped eyes on before she expedited them to Kingdom Come. Russian ways were not American ways. He thanked Heaven for it.

Nevertheless he acquired the habit of insomnia. The post of Consul in this obscure little Russian town had been procured for him by influential friends because he was recuperating from a nervous break-down and required an easy berth. The irony of that did not tend to raise his spirits. Nevertheless, he had all but nerved himself for the trip to St. Petersburg when the unexpected happened. One fine morning Varvara Alexandrovna had disappeared from her cell. She had made her escape through the filed grating of the window. Where had she procured the file? Neither

Frau Ursula, nor the German Consul, nor the American Consul could be suspected. The Governor of the prison was furious, and the trembling jailer suggested that the tall, handsome, dark young gentleman, who so strikingly resembled the prisoner and who had been admitted on an especial pass of the Governor, had brought it. The Governor roared out his wrath. He had given no especial pass to any one, least of all to Dmitri Stepanovich Vasalov, whom he easily identified from the jailer's description.

But the damage was done. Plot and counterplot; stroke and counterstroke; forgery and counter-forgery. That, Frau Ursula reflected, was typical of Russia. She derived a curious satisfaction from Madame von Estritz's flight. It seemed to invest her incipient suspicion that the Russian wife of the man whom she had loved did not really love her own child with the authority of chapter and verse. Her escape must have been long in preparing. If she had really loved little Guido, would she not, knowing of the project to rescue herself, have kept him by her? Instead of that, she had abandoned the child. She had abandoned the child to give herself anew to her Cause! An infernal cause, Frau Ursula reflected since its primary object seemed to be murder. All her pity for Madame von Estritz was wiped away. She could not pity a woman whom she considered destitute of the maternal instinct. The letter among the heliotrope-scented handkerchiefs to the contrary.

Ursula von Wendt left Russia within the hour. She detested Russia. She had a horrid fear that in some way these Russian brutes would try to involve her in the case, or would rob her of the child. Her fears were groundless. She reached Berlin in safety and immediately began preparations for emigrating to the United States. She had willingly acquiesced in Varvara Alexandrovna's request that the Synthetic Babe be reared on neutral soil. She had absorbed all of Madame von Estritz's other rules and regulations and by-laws for the upbringing of the boy without making any definite promise. She wanted to digest the entire wild project involving the lad before committing herself to it definitely. She might have proved recalcitrant about emigration if she had not for a long time prior to her expedition into Russia coquetted with the idea of translating herself across the Atlantic.

Her departure was delayed by the ill health of her little ward. The cruel blow upon his spine, which he had received by accident, was bearing evil fruit. Throughout several years the child required expert medical attention. At the end of two years, he seemed as normal as any other child, and splints and ointments were things of the past. They might also be things of the future, the specialist who had treated the child, warned her. There might be a recurrence of the spinal trouble in the child's seventh or eighth year. Wholesome food, light, fresh air, and exercise delicately graduated and juxtaposed to periods of rest, were the only preventive measures within reach.

Ursula von Wendt, remembered her promise to transplant the frail Synthetic plant to impartial America, but the idea of uprooting herself, which had fascinated her two years earlier, seemed less attractive to her now. She experienced gloomy forebodings and a strong disinclination to venture upon so hazardous an undertaking. She had, I think, a lurking fear that Indians still prowled about the streets of American cities after dark. And with no man to protect her and the child——!

While she was in the throes of her uncertainty, a young *Berliner* of her own age, who managed a small *Confections-laden* for the widow of his former employer, drifted more intimately upon the scenes of her life. Young Erich Hauser was distinctly not of her own class. The son of a well-to-do *Metzgermeister*, he had received an education far above his station. His intelligence was keen and did not move entirely upon a material plane, and it irked him that in spite of his superior mentality and excellent education he should be rigidly barred from the society of those whom he conceived to be his peers but who regarded him as an inferior.

Frau Ursula, in whom the caste instinct was at this time very strong, tolerated the man's society only because of his kindness to little Guido. When he asked to marry her, she took no pains to hide her amazement at his audacity. Instead of resenting her assumption of superiority, he persisted in urging his suit. He was a *Streber*, and as such could not allow himself to be side-tracked by rebuffs or snubs. A *Streber*, though of a genus similar to that of climber, presents marked peculiarities of his own. Erich

Hauser had an excellent substratum of laudable qualities with which to back his pretensions. He was well-read, a fluent talker, an excellent business man. And he was absolutely honest. Nor was his good-nature, displayed in amusing little Guido, wholly an assumed virtue. Some calculation there may have been, and considerable kindness as well.

Frau Ursula was too deep in Hauser's debt for the semi-genuine, semi-spurious kindnesses showered upon Guido to turn him out like a chimney-sweep, as she would have liked to do. She froze him and he declined to congeal. She snubbed him, and his servility became intensified. He was so very meek and humble and deferential that she, whose technique with men—and women too—was perfect, was unable to disencumber herself of him.

It so happened one day that he told her that his chief ambition was to emigrate to America. To that end he was hoarding his savings. One trip to America he had made as a lad, and he had received an overwhelming impression of general prosperity which time had not obliterated. Given a fair start in his line of business, and a capable man might become a millionaire in ten years' time. Might! He corrected himself. "Was bound to" was what he had meant to say.

Frau Ursula turned over carefully in her mind all that Hauser had said to her. She surmised that he had spoken with a purpose. She saw nothing reprehensible in his view of America as a country inviting exploitation, since she herself, whenever her thoughts turned America-wards, was actuated solely by her unfulfilled promise to Guido's mother and by a desire to be rid forever of the vexatious memory of the high estate from which she had fallen in divorcing her husband, the *Rittergutsbesitzer* of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

She imagined furthermore that Hauser suspected that she had considerable money, and that his suit was inspired not so much by passion as by mercenary considerations. In assuming this she was wrong. Even a *Streber*, being human, must have appetites and may have a heart. Hauser was doubtless attracted by Frau Ursula's higher social position and independent means, but he was at the same time very genuinely in love with her. To call a woman of Frau Ursula's superior caliber wife, to possess her, to have her bear

his name, was the apex of his dreams, the topmost pinnacle of his *Strebertum* ambitions.

After mature reflection, Frau Ursula, observing due caution, gradually removed the bristles and thorns from her manner toward Hauser. He renewed his offer of marriage as she had known he would do, and this gave her the desired opening.

"Herr Hauser," she said, "I have a long and strange story to tell you. It is possible that we may arrive at a compromise."

She told him the story of her rescue of Guido from the Russian prison, of his mother's subsequent escape, of the money waiting for the child in New York, of the large income derived from that money of which she had the use, and of the gift made her outright by Guido's mother. She did not tell him just how large little Guido's fortune was, nor that she had loved Guido's father, deeming that this concerned no one but herself. She concluded by offering him the use of the fifty thousand dollars which Madame von Estritz had given her, for an indefinite period, without interest, if in return he would be willing to enter into a purely nominal marriage with her. All this was said by her on the supposition that he did not love her.

Hauser listened attentively to her story, noting the hiatus existing between her rescue of the child and an adequate motive. His face was a blank, as he said, very blandly:

"I confess I do not entirely comprehend why you should offer me the sum of fifty thousand dollars for an indefinite period—I may lose it, you know—in return for my name, when, as you say, you do not love me."

"I offer it because I know that you require money to carry out your plans. I, on the other hand, need an honest man's protection. You speak English, you've been in America before, you are a capable business man. You have all qualifications for emigration which I lack."

"In other words, you desire a dependable courier whom you can lose only through death?" he inquired, ironically. He had the trick of sarcasm. He had purposively cultivated it. He thought it gave him an aristocratic air.

"Delicacy forbade my couching the necessity I am under in terms so crude," responded the lady, with some spirit. "If you desire your freedom, after a reasonable time, as

soon as I have found my bearings, you will not find me opposed to a divorce."

"Are you sure that you do not mean that you will desire your freedom after a 'reasonable time?'"

"I am not given to equivocation," said Frau Ursula coldly. "I mean what I say. Also, you have expressed yourself loosely. As I have no intention of resigning my freedom, there can be no talk of regaining it."

"Marriage is a tie," said Hauser, tranquilly.

"Not in our case," said Frau Ursula, determinedly. "I am afraid I have not made myself entirely clear. I do not love you—and there must be no expectations on your part of a husband's privileges. Our marriage is to be purely a marriage of convenience, a nominal marriage, as I have said before."

"I understand that perfectly," said Hauser, with utmost humility. Had Frau Ursula noted the sardonic smile that lurked in the averted eyes, she might have thought the *Streber* a creature meaner, and yet less mean and far, far more formidable than she had conceived him to be.

"And this boy of yours—who is not yours—how strange that you should feel such a self-sacrificing love for him!"

"Love is a luxury, we may dispose of it as we see fit," said Frau Ursula with a harshness meant to convey that she would not allow one jot or tittle of that delectable sweetmeat to be diverted to Hauser.

The *Streber* smiled. He was not much of a psychologist, but he thought he was. Psychology is a dangerous avocation for any but experts,—as we shall see later.

He said:

"Exactly." And bowed acquiescence in her dictum as gallantly as if his father had been a courtier instead of a sausage butcher. "Would I be presuming if I asked some further details of this strange pact of which Guido is the subject? You have glanced at it——"

"I am afraid I cannot tell you more about it just now," she said. "I have not yet definitely made up my mind whether I am going to carry out all the wishes of his parents. I have made no promise excepting the one—that he shall be reared in America."

The *Streber* shrugged his shoulders. He was not in the

least hurt at being thus unceremoniously thrust beyond the outskirts of her confidence.

Frau Ursula despised him anew for his calm acceptance of the snub which she had just visited upon him. She was a good woman, but narrow and not over-clever. Had she been as clever as she was good, her cleverness might have acted as a brake for the universal condemnation in which she drenched the *Streber*. She would then have known that often we deem ourselves loyal to those whom we love when in truth we are merely unkind to those whom we dislike.

"I think," said Hauser, "we might as well clinch matters. I am perfectly willing to accept the post as your courier."

A strange bargain strangely consummated. Frau Ursula had twice in the past acted upon her own initiative—once when she had left the *Rittergutsbesitzer*, and in traveling alone into Russia. Both times she had acted under the propulsion of a tremendous impetus. She had no such impetus to take her to America, and as a result she committed the crowning folly of her life.

They were married a fortnight later. Hauser promised to maintain absolute silence regarding the boy's nativity. No one, not the child himself, was to suspect that Guido Hauser was not Guido Hauser.

Within three days of her marriage Frau Ursula discovered the egregiousness of her venture. Hauser had no intention of embracing the rôle of nominal husband assigned to him.

He came briskly into the room one evening, and quickly bending over, kissed her.

She drew away, frowning, throwing him the same sort of look which had so often cowed him before.

He seated himself at her side:

"My dear Ursula," he said, "you are too sensible a woman to believe that any man is going to be kept at arm's length by his wife."

Frau Ursula opened her aristocratic eyes wide in astonishment. She did not entirely recognize in the man at her side who showed such suave masterfulness and thoroughbred urbanity the despised *Streber*, the creature of an inferior social class, the upper servant who, for reasons of her own, was for a while to masquerade as her husband, being well paid for the honor. The profound contempt which she

had entertained for him was somewhat shaken. Something distantly akin to respect crept into her heart for his son of the people who could muster so grand and so bland a manner.

"I love you, Ursula," he said, speaking with a certain noble simplicity. A bounder he might be when in the grasp of ambition and greed, but he was anything but a bounder at this moment, as Frau Ursula grudgingly admitted to herself.

"I love you, Ursula," he repeated, "and I want you to understand that I did not make this bargain with you because of the money. I am glad to have the loan of it—I will return you double the sum before ten years have gone by. But I would not have married you for the money if I had not loved you. I intend to win you. It may take a long time, but I am going to win out."

The calm assurance with which he spoke, the unabashed passion with which he looked at her, caused her heart to stand still with a choking sense of impotence and dismay. For a minute she was too angry to speak. Then she said:

"You will never win me. If we are to remain friends you will not attempt to make love to me."

"I am not aware that we have ever been friends," said the *Streber* as coolly and superciliously as she herself might have done. Frau Ursula quailed. She had a blinding insight into this man's possibilities and realized that she had laughably underestimated him. She was furious with him for having hoodwinked her, furious with herself for having been so simple.

However bitterly she regretted having made the bargain, there was nothing to do but to go through with it. They sailed for New York in April, 1898. The steamer was crowded, and it was difficult to obtain berths in separate cabins. Frau Ursula anticipated a stormy scene with her husband in this matter of separate cabins, but he acquiesced in her suggestion with protest. He had, she perceived, some delicacy. But delicacy and tact, although twin virtues, are not identical any more than human twins are identical. On board the steamer, when strangers were present, and she dared not protest, he insisted on patting her hand, or touching her cheek, or brushing imaginary wisps of hair from her brow. Bred as she was, intimate gestures of this sort in the

full glare of publicity would have been insufferable though coming from the man she loved. Coming from Hauser, whom she no longer regarded as a mere *Streber*, they were odious indeed. When alone with him she attempted to remonstrate with him against these familiarities on the ground of breeding. He thought her plea a subterfuge. Had he believed in the sincerity of her objections, with his keen zest for social values, he would have desisted. As it was, he continued these blatant means of asserting his dominion over her person. Then, too, in his preoccupation with his wife, he was indifferent to the point of rudeness to the claims of other women. To be discourteous to his wife's sex was his notion of showing his love for her.

She magnified his every offense a thousandfold. The enforced proximity on board the vessel made him seem a hundred times more odious than he really was. He had his good points, she could not deny it. He was kindness itself to her and to little Guido. And he was kindness itself to the wife of an emigrant who fell ill during the voyage. He sent her fruit and delicacies from the first cabin table, and when she died, he took up a collection among the passengers for the benefit of the widower, who seemed a helpless sort of a creature to undertake the rearing of six small children single-handedly.

Undoubtedly, he had his good points. There were moments when she wished he had not a single one. He got on famously with men, and she could see also that in spite of his wanton lack of courtesy toward women they liked him and respected him. This amazed Frau Ursula, until one day one of the women passengers told her that everybody liked Hauser so much because one could see how utterly devoted he was to his wife and boy.

Frau Ursula winced. The fellow-voyager's words contained a shadowy insinuation that Hauser's wife did not entirely appreciate Hauser and Hauser's love. As a result, Frau Ursula's dislike for her husband waxed and throve. But there had been injected into that dislike the germ of respect. His manners might be offensive, even boorish, but she knew that deep down in this man's nature was imbedded a kernel of goodness and substantial worth which, henceforth, she would never be able entirely to ignore.

His worst offense, of course, was that he was not Guido

von Estritz. There was something of idolatry in the love she had given the man who did not even suspect that she cared for him. The chastest imagination has its hours of blackguardly license; the cleanest heart owns a corner requiring chlorides and white-wash. Frau Ursula was as good and as pure-minded a woman as could be found the world over. But she was not an angel. And she had been married before—married in fact as well as in word—to a man whom she did not love. By the agony of a loveless marriage she was able to measure the joyous intoxication of wedlock based on love.

She had loved von Estritz passionately and with a full-blooded love. She had not seen him in death. A curious fatuity of the mind decrees that him whom the eyes have not seen as lifeless clay the heart continues to sense as a living, breathing soul. Thus she continued to picture Guido von Estritz. She could not conceive that that ardent, enthusiastic brain had been snuffed out, she could not think of him as having passed on to the ultimate bourne. His child, by a miracle, had been tossed into her life. His wife had been eliminated from the scene, and the questions, "Whither? Whence? Where?" as touching her person could be answered with no more certainty than if she had been a departed soul.

Frau Ursula was not a woman in whom the maternal instinct takes the trivial form of mere sensuous joy in the pink and white loveliness of the little human toys. She saw in every child a human personality in the bud. This particular child must be her lost Guido's personality in counterfeit presentment; for in spite of the utter dissimilarity in the appearance of father and son, she could not repress the conviction that this tiny creature was instinct with his father's spirit. When she remembered the Synthesis which the child was supposed to represent and to achieve, she became disdainful. She did not allow poor Varvara Alexandrovna a part in her own child. Had the Russian woman not abandoned her babe? Frau Ursula spent hours at the child's bed, hoping to surprise in the little creature some resemblance, some trick of expression, some gesture that might recall his father. She never thought of little Guido as the child of Varvara Alexandrovna and of von Estritz. It was von Estritz's child—and hers. She was its spiritual

mother. In time she came to look upon herself as von Estritz's widow—or as his wife, since she did not distinctly visualize his death.

Such being her frame of mind, the wooing of herself by any other man was an impertinence and an immorality. Yet it was to this—impertinence and immorality—that she had condemned herself. After one or two impassioned appeals on Hauser's part, she began dimly to realize that years might—and would—elapse before her rejections would wear down his persistence. She set her teeth and smiled grimly. What, after all, did it matter? Love sometimes changes good women into the incarnation of selfishness. Hauser's happiness did not enter into the equation in the least in Frau Ursula's summation of facts. He had been a necessary factor in her translation from the Old World to the New. And she had won Estritz's child. That was the great pivotal fact of her life. She was the guiding star, the providence, the father, the mother, the guardian angel and earthly guardian, the what not else of von Estritz's boy.

Part I
CHILDHOOD

CHAPTER I

NINE years have elapsed since Frau Ursula's dual translation from Frau Ursula von Wendt and the Fatherland to Mrs. Erich Hauser and the Land of Illimitable Possibilities, which was the semi-ironic, semi-sincere cognomen bestowed upon the United States by the Germans of Frau Ursula's day. Almost half that time little Guido Hauser had spent in bed, and yet he was not unhappy. For to console and solace him he had a well-oiled imagination that worked overtime without urging, which is something to be valued more highly than the treasure of Captain Kidd by a little boy condemned periodically to a two or three years' cruise in bed.

One morning in February, Guido sat propped up in bed, watching the heavy, dropsical-looking snow descend in a slowly-moving, thick curtain. It was not yet eight o'clock, and the snow shut out the light. The child, since it was too dark to read, contented himself with watching the unrolling white drapery with a rapt, intent expression. His white little face was so wasted that it looked haggard and old. It was completely submerged by the brilliantly black eyes which stood out from the pale face with the sparkling vividness with which an illumined letter lifts itself from a vellum page.

Suddenly the moving curtain of snow slackened its speed. It became thinner in texture, less voluminous, almost diaphanous. Rays of pale light stabbed through the white sheen, crowded it aside, elided it entirely, revealing a landscape piled high with ermine and diamonds.

"*Mutterchen*," Guido cried, or rather bellowed with a vigor which showed that his lungs were quite undebilitated. "*Mutterchen*, come here, quick!" Nothing but German was spoken in the Hauser household. Frau Ursula came running into the room, napkin in hand.

"*Mein lieber Junge!* What's the matter, dear?"

"You've promised me a sleigh-ride the first fine day. We've waited all winter. And now it's stopped snowing!"

"Why, so it has!" said Frau Ursula, in feigned surprise.

"Mother, can we go sleighing to-day?"

"And do you really care for a sleigh-ride?" From her tone one would have judged that a liking for sleigh-riding was an abnormal taste.

"Mother! You are teasing me. We are going."

"I've not said so."

"No—but we're going! I can tell. By your eyes. You're a shocking tease, Mother. I'm so happy."

He threw himself into her arms, snuggling his face into her shoulder like a kitten. The weight of his frail little body was as nought. Unlike a healthy child, which, when clasped in one's arm, becomes a weight of lead after a while, the slight pressure which Guido exerted seemed to dissipate itself after a few moments. Her supreme love for the child persuaded her into the grotesque belief that his flesh was resolved into her own at such moments—that she thus achieved the mystical unity which exists between mother and child before birth.

She had cast off her spiritual weeds at last. Like many an actual widow, she lived in the child—*his* child. She had completely ceased to think of the boy as not belonging to her. His father was dead. His mother had undoubtedly been recaptured, and had probably been sent to Siberia again. To all practical intents she, too, was dead. These things were things of the past, and she no longer harked back to them. She no longer repined and regretted that Guido did not resemble his father. The child's own personality had conquered her. She loved him now for his own sake, not because he was von Estritz's child. Sometimes, under all his gentleness and meekness there showed a wild fieriness, a flaming enthusiasm which lent itself to quick transitions and fine gradations and which she was at a loss to explain. He had not derived the trait from his lymphatic father nor, she thought, from his fanatical mother. At such times a great fear would descend upon Frau Ursula. For might it not be the Synthesis germinating? Strange to say, as her spiritual widowhood receded into the background of her thoughts, the Synthesis came to the fore. She regretted that she had not a more

sharply limned recollection of all von Estritz had told her about his plan, and about all Varvara Alexandrovna had told her of the child's destiny. In vague outline she knew perfectly what the project had been and understood along which lines the von Estritzes would have educated the boy. She had decided, generously, to carry out the wishes indicated by Varvara Alexandrovna, although she had made no definite promise. Nor was she prompted solely by generosity in this decision. She entertained a sort of superstitious fear of the Synthesis, as if it were a new species of ancestral curse. This held her to a minute observance of all that Varvara Alexandrovna had prescribed.

"Guido, *mein Liebling*," she said, "unclasp me. If we are to go I must hurry and make my arrangements for the day."

"Then we *are* going! Oh, Mother."

"Yes, my pet, we are going. But you must be a good boy. I do not want a temperature to-morrow as a result of to-day's outing."

"I'll be as good as gold. Oh, Mother—I love you so!"

"*Schmeichelkaetschen!* You must surely have kissed the Blarney Stone." But she came back to the child's bedside and kissed him once more. "I want you to rest quietly on your back until I come to dress you," she called back over her shoulder.

"Well," said her husband, as she came back into the dining-room, "what was the matter with him *now*?"

That "now" was Shakespearian in its compression of thunderous disapproval.

"We are going for a sleigh-ride," she replied, shortly.

"Ah, indeed! The heir-apparent desires to go sleigh-riding. Ordinary mortals therefore must do without their second cup of coffee."

Frau Ursula colored, angrily.

"I beg your pardon," she said. "May I help you now?"

"Thanks, no, I don't care for cold coffee. Or—yes, I'll have it. Cold coffee—you know the saying—improves one's looks. Perhaps if I become better-looking, you'll have eyes for me as well as for our young lord."

Frau Ursula did not reply to this tirade, but her hand trembled as she handed her husband the filled cup. Having failed in his effort to win her, he had adopted this offensive

manner of punishing her. His manner now fluctuated continually between downright brutality and a sarcasm no less cruel. What might have passed as a good-natured banter with a man of gentler breeding, became a deadly gibe on his lips. Frau Ursula had long since realized that she must not waste the vitality required by her service for Guido in futile hatred of the man whose name she bore. Perhaps, subconsciously, her conscience pricked her. She realized in a dim way that the bargain between them was not a fair one. Had her notion of personal purity been less exalted, she might have yielded herself to him and raised him to her own level. Indeed, she sometimes thought that he had reached that level without her help. He was well liked everywhere, and was considered one of the leading citizens of the little town of Anasquoit, in which they had settled.

Hauser had been very successful. He had made a great success of the first department store of which Anasquoit boasted, although everybody had predicted that no department store could exist in Anasquoit. The reason for this dismal forecast which, luckily for Hauser, had not been realized, was the proximity of Anasquoit to New York. Flung along the Jersey shore of the Hudson, like a broad band of ribbon, almost directly opposite to the metropolis, Anasquoit, with all the pretensions of a city, was in reality little more than a suburb. It was this proximity to the largest city of the world that for years had crippled its industrial and financial growth quite as effectually as the River which formed Anasquoit's eastern border, and the Palisades, which rose frowning like turreted battlements along its western fringe, had restricted its physical growth and compressed it into its ribbon form.

✓ New York was so close at hand that to ferry across the River was barely more trouble than to step across the street. The cars that ran from the ferry to all the large stores were convenient and speedy, and, when the last was said, the New York shops outdistanced the finest variety that the most enterprising Anasquoitian store-keeper could possibly afford to offer his clientage. Department stores came in Anasquoit and lived their little day and were consigned to the limbo of financial failures in the anti-Hauserian days. Therefore the pessimists of the town

sought to dissuade Hauser from his mad enterprise. He embarked upon it nevertheless, and made his venture pay, and enlarged his store every few years. It was, of course, not an Altman's, or a McCreery's, but it was an excellent shop for medium-priced goods, and it was the pride of Hauser's heart. The *Streber's* business ambitions had climbed the first rung of the ladder which led to the goal which he had set himself. But his personal aspirations were precisely where they had been nine years earlier, and this was wormwood both to his pride and to his love.

Having handed her husband his second cup of coffee, Frau Ursula rose precipitately.

"Please sit down and finish your own breakfast, will you!" Hauser said petulantly.

Frau Ursula had learned not to cross her husband's wishes unnecessarily. She sat down again, obediently.

After a moment she said, meekly:

"If you do not mind very much, I should like to do my telephoning now."

"Mind? Why should I mind." The insolence of his sarcasm was superb. "Am I not accustomed to be thrust aside at all times for the convenience of your young prince? He might be the heir-apparent to the Romanovs, for all the fuss you make over him, instead of heir-apparent to the Fool Idea of a couple of Infatuated Lunatics!"

Frau Ursula, owing to certain singularities in the boy's education, had been forced to take Hauser into the secret of the Synthesis. She shrank into herself at his words.

"Erich!" she exclaimed, resentfully, "you promised me never to speak of this!"

"Not to the boy—not to any stranger. Did that include you?" He laughed, harshly, bitterly. "Of course, we are strangers. Still! Well, it seems I must ask permission to speak in my own house. I dare say I shall accustom myself to that, *too*."

This "too," like the "now" which he had flung at her earlier in their interview, was a condensation of the repressed disappointment and mortification of years.

Frau Ursula bit her lips. After a moment she said:

"Erich, I thought we had agreed to be civil to each other."

"Oh, I try to be civil. But the fuss you make about that brat gets on my nerves."

The contumelious word stung Frau Ursula into retorting:

"You owe your business prosperity to the 'brat's' money!"

"And I'm paying him seven per cent, more than the legal rate," her husband snarled. "Oh, well, continue to make a fool of yourself over this young political Messiah!"

He dashed down his cup so violently that the saucer cracked. Then, rising abruptly, he walked rapidly toward Guido's door.

The apartment occupied by the Hausers was an expensive one and boasted of a private hall, but instead of taking the circuitous route to his own room, Hauser usually walked through the rooms occupied by his wife and Guido. Frau Ursula could not tell, therefore, whether he was going to his own room or to the boy's. She exclaimed, impetuously:

"Erich!"

"Well?"

"Erich, don't say anything unkind to the boy to-day. The last time he was out of the house was in December. It is February now. All winter he waited patiently for a sleigh-ride. Don't spoil it for him."

Hauser laughed mockingly, tauntingly. He made her a low bow.

"I shall endeavor not to annoy his Highness," he said, and stepped across the threshold of the boy's room.

"Fool, fool that I was!" muttered Frau Ursula, and braced herself to endure new torture.

But, long as she knew Hauser, she had not yet learned to fathom his moods. He was this morning in not nearly as bad a humor as she believed, but sarcasm had become an ingrained habit. Perhaps it was a mask, as well. There was, it must always be remembered, his side of the case as well as hers. And if he made her miserable at times it is only fair to remember that she made him unhappy always.

"Your mother tells me," Hauser was saying to Guido, "that I must not tease you to-day, because you are to have a merry day. When you are indisposed I am not permitted

to aggravate you, either. Your Highness perceives the advantage accruing to birth."

The blood mounted to Frau Ursula's cheek dully, heavily, thickly. To bait the child like that! Sarcasm is always a cruel weapon, an unfair one when used against an opponent too young or too poorly dowered by nature to retaliate. Guido, to whom Hauser's allusions were of course entirely unintelligible, had the sensation of being lashed to right and to left by a scourge that was invisible but which blistered and ripped open every spot upon which it descended. Usually he writhed cruelly under his father's ridicule—for as such he construed the irony which he did not comprehend—remembered it, pored over it, could make nothing of it and ended by wondering why his father hated him so much. There were times when he hated his father so viciously that all currents of heart and mind seemed to merge themselves into a stream feeding that hatred. Other times there were when he entertained something like indulgent pity for his father, apprehending blindly that only a canker-eaten heart can produce fruit so bitter.

To-day he pitied him, a little contemptuously. Anticipatory joy had forged a sort of spiritual armor for him which was dented but not broken by the shafts which his father hurled at him.

"We are going for a sleigh-ride, father," the child exclaimed. "Can't you come, too?"

"No, my son." Hauser's "my son" was always obscurely wicked, pregnant with reproach and with insolence. "Sleigh-rides are for the elect of the earth—for lady-like little boys and their sweet mammas. Base wretches like myself must labor in the sweat of their brow."

Frau Ursula, listening intently, perceived that Hauser's voice had changed subtly. The note of cruelty had almost died away. Almost, almost, his words might have been set down as the pleasantries of a vulgarian.

"I'm sorry you cannot come," the child replied, quietly. Never had the sweet, boyish treble seemed so pristine and so pure. The tears sprang to Frau Ursula's eyes.

Her husband had re-entered the dining-room. He was now equipped for the street in overcoat and rubbers. His hat was in his hand. In speaking to her he never failed

to assume a deferential attitude, even when his tongue made cruel havoc of her feelings. And upon his lips there was always a mocking smile.

"Tears!" he said. "Tears." And as if to convince her of the absurdity of weeping, he went back to Guido's door and said, quite pleasantly:

"Good-bye, Guido, have a good time and don't forget to bring me home a big snow-ball to eat for my dessert."

The child's laughter rang uncertainly through the room as the door closed behind the man. Frau Ursula sat quite still for a moment.

"He's not wholly evil," she reflected for the thousandth time. The bargain had been a dishonest one on her part, without a doubt. That he had pretended to accept it, and in doing so had been equally dishonest did not exculpate her. Women are more moral than men—or ought to be. She, in this instance, had not been more moral than the man, and that was the crux of the situation. He was justified in despising her. Matrimony was not a cloak, nor a mask. It was a sacred institution. All civilized society was based on its recognition and on a moral and upright observance of its principle. She had offended against that principle in a somewhat unusual way. But she had offended—and the impropriety of her conduct could not be explained away. These thoughts harrowed her—not for the first time. Amends! Could she make them? Should she? If she did make them it would be solely for the ulterior purpose of persuading Hauser to change his manner toward Guido. For Guido's sake she was willing to make very nearly any sacrifice. She thrust the thought into the mental cupboard where she kept all the tentatives and possibilities which required serious consideration at an indefinite future time.

She roused herself from her reverie and began her preparations for the day. The immediate thing to be attended to was the telephoning.

She rang up Guido's physician first.

Dr. Koenig was a very old man and he and Frau Ursula were excellent friends. Like the first Guido von Estritz, he too was an *Achtundvierziger*, but he did not speak often of that period of his life. The recollections evoked were too painful. Possibly, also, he felt that his listeners felt

a perfunctory interest only in what had been to him the most vital part of life. He was hale and hearty at eighty, and quite as sound mentally as physically, circumstances which he ascribed to the conjoined facts that, as an old bachelor, he had escaped the vicissitudes and excitements of matrimony, and that he ate plain, wholesome, coarse food—*derbe Hausmannskost*—as he called it. He had been through the Civil War as a surgeon. Of that experience also he was loath to speak. There clung to him and emanated from him an air of such superlative honesty and unfeigned, downright goodness that Frau Ursula on meeting him nine years ago, had, as she subsequently avowed, loved him from the first as a sort of secondary father.

She rang up Dr. Koenig ostensibly to obtain his permission for the outing. In truth, she desired to shift the responsibility to his shoulders, for she knew very well that he would approve.

"*Praechtig*," he cried back over the wire in answer to her query. "You couldn't have a finer day. I have a serious operation at the hospital. Otherwise I'd be tempted to go with you and my little patient."

Next she telephoned for the sleigh. The third call was a message to be carried to Frau Schuster, a very old and decrepit lady who came every day to sit with Guido. This gave Frau Ursula liberty of movement and time to attend to her household duties and to her tasks at the store, which she had voluntarily assumed and which consisted of a daily inspection of the kitchen of the restaurant which Hauser had installed in the basement of his shop in imitation of the New York stores. Frau Ursula also attended to the ordering for the restaurant, paid the bills, kept tab on the linen closet and on the stores and generally acted as manager. Hauser had offered to pay his wife a regular salary. This she had declined. Caste pride was by no means extinct in her, and it had gone against the grain to identify herself with something so plebeian as the restaurant of a department store. She had done so solely because she hoped that her largeness of view would induce in her husband a responsive kindness and that his behavior toward Guido would be materially modified

thereby. Her hopes, as we have seen, had not been fulfilled.

Last of all she telephoned to Frau Baumgarten. Otto Baumgarten had been a classmate of Guido's during Guido's last brief interim of health. After Guido's relapse into invalidism, Otto, with doglike devotion, came punctually every day at half-past three to bring Guido the day's lessons and to elucidate what was needful for a comprehension of the home-work. The scheme worked admirably and had enabled Guido to keep up with his class throughout two years. Both boys were exceptionally intelligent, and Otto's rôle of tutor and coach was facilitated by Guido's aptness as a pupil.

Frau Ursula informed Frau Baumgarten of the project in hand, asking her to allow Otto to miss this one day in school so that he might share the pleasure of his little friend.

"*Ach!*" Frau Baumgarten at the other end of the wire heaved an audible sigh. "My lad would love it! But, what will you? So strict is my man with the boy. He would be angry. *Ach!* So very angry if such a thing I permitted."

"Couldn't you 'phone your husband at his office and get his permission?" Frau Ursula suggested.

"What? 'Phone him to his office?" The consternation expressed by Frau Baumgarten's voice struck Frau Ursula as exquisitely funny. Frau Baumgarten was a plump, good-hearted, whole-souled but simple-minded woman, who stood greatly in awe of her *spiessbuergerlicher* husband. Frau Ursula pictured the good little woman standing at the other end of the wire, mouth agape, eyes popping out of her head with horror at Frau Ursula's ruthless attempt to instigate a domestic rebellion in the Baumgarten household. "Never, never could I think of doing such a thing, *liebe* Frau Hauser! *Ach*, you are lucky! Your man allows you a free hand with your boy. But I thank you for the invitation all the same."

With a little shrug of contempt Frau Ursula rang off. Frau Baumgarten had remained the typical German *Hausfrau*. She had absolutely no will and no mind of her own. She did her husband's bidding, thought his thoughts, used his language. America had wrought absolutely no change

in her mental outlook. Frau Ursula sighed. The contempt which she had felt a moment before for Otto's mother became strongly tinged with pity. She herself had undergone such a spiritual expansion since her transplantation that it was difficult for her to understand the arrested growth, the rigid adherence to primitive forms of wifedom which hall-marked so many of her German-American sisters.

Guido had been straining every nerve to catch what he could of the telephonic conversation.

"Won't Tante Baumgarten let Otto come?" he demanded.

"She would, I think. But Otto's father would object," Frau Ursula replied.

"Fathers," said the boy with great unction, "are a nuisance."

"Guido!"

"I shouldn't have said that, I know," said the boy, unrepentantly.

"You shouldn't have thought it," said Frau Ursula with an entirely insincere emphasis.

"Well, didn't Father begin by being horrid again this morning?" Guido retorted. "Why does he always call me 'your Highness?' Why does he always sneer at me the way he does? Is it because I'm sick all the time? That's not my fault, is it? And I tried to be decent. I asked him to come with us—though neither of us really wanted him—why can't he be half-ways nice——"

"I decline to discuss your father with you," said Frau Ursula. Her blood was beating wildly in her heart, at her temples, against her wrists. "Amends!" The thought which she had scrapped and cast into the junk-room of her mind for consideration at some uncertain date, resurrected itself and came and stared her impudently in the face.

If her husband continued to drench the child in sarcasm, serious injury to the boy's character was bound to result. Moral cowardice and dissimulation were the most negligible of these injuries. Alternating with fear, she had seen on Guido's face the shadow of so black an anger that her heart had stood still with fright. For she realized that anger, continually fed by righteous indignation, must turn itself into an explosive as pregnant and deadly as dynamite. Moral and mental attributes, von Estritz and Varvara

Alexandrovna to the contrary, are perhaps not synthetizable. There was in Guido's blood that which Frau Ursula must look upon as the taint of blood-guilt. What shape, then, or form, would an explosion of his anger take? Frau Ursula felt a tremor of painful apprehension.

She banished these distressing thoughts, spoke cheerfully to Guido, who was looking unhappy because she had rebuked him, and dressed herself and the child. They started at ten o'clock. Mercury had dropped steadily since dawn, and the day had brightened perceptibly. The sharp decline in the temperature had transformed the landscape for miles around into surpassing, unimagined loveliness. Every pillar and post was a sentinel raimented in argent armor, shining more magically and brightly than the most splendid coat-of-arms ever forged by Italian armorer. Every tree was a tower of silver. The very roads were shimmering incandescently as if studded with all the jewels of Aladdin's cave. And the music made by the wind as it moved among the branches of the trees, stiff and unresponsive in their precious raiment, was something no orchestra nor instrument thereof—not violin nor lute nor woodhorn nor even the voice of the harp wedded to the song of the organ—might imitate.

The ice-encased wind which beat against their faces made conversation impossible. Frau Ursula slipped a veil across the child's forehead and mouth to protect him from the unaccustomed cold, and the ride continued in a silence unbroken save by the merry jingling of the sleigh-bells and the crunching of the runners against the hard crust of the snow. Guido was strangely silent throughout the dinner which they ate at a small road-house. Frau Ursula thought he was too fatigued to speak, and hired a room for a few hours so that Guido might rest. But he could not—or would not—sleep. And he refused to speak. His pre-occupation continued throughout the homelap, and extended itself through the evening meal and evening. To all of her agonized questions, "Are you quite well, *mein Herzensjunge?* Nun, wo fehlt es, denn?" he replied with vapid politeness:

"I am quite well, thank you. *Ich habe mich koestlich amuesirt.*"

She fell back upon her theory of fatigue, and ascribed

to that this curious inhibition of his speaking powers. She put out his light a nine o'clock—he had gone right to bed on reaching home—and, not hearing a sound, concluded that he had gone asleep. At half-past eleven, however, after she had retired to the couch in Guido's room on which she slept during his long illnesses, she heard a plaintive wail issuing out of the darkness.

"*Mutterchen*, are you asleep?" a very wide-awake voice inquired.

"*Nein, mein Liebling.*"

"*Mutterchen*, I cannot sleep. *Mutterchen*, the dark bothers me."

She rose and lighted the gas. Guido was sitting up in bed, his hair disheveled by the combing of nervous fingers, his cheeks flushed and warm, his eyes shining with a feverish light.

"*Mutterchen!* The beauty of all we saw stabs me like a knife. It hurts. All those fairy bowers—those—those Pantheons of snow and ice!"

So this—ecstasy—was the reason of his strange silence throughout the excursion and throughout the evening. And she had thought him numbed with fatigue!

The child burst into a rhapsody which would not be quelled. He insisted on analyzing, dissecting and describing his experience. In his hands, under his fingering, the excursion became an adventure, a thing unique, a thing of beauty and moral significance. He ransacked the books he had read—and he had read much for a boy of eleven—for comparisons, only to reject them as stale and inadequate. Then he fell to inventing descriptions of his own. The flights his imagination took were sparkling, electric, dashing. In spite of his meager child's vocabulary, plugged here and there with royal words, every phrase held a compressed thought, every sentence was volcanic. His lyric ecstasy led him into a wilderness peopled by strange, elfish creatures, which, having long inhabited the subconscious stratum of his imagination, now boldly scurried out into the welcome light of full consciousness.

Frau Ursula, on that momentous night, experienced the same sensations which had flowed through head and veins upon her first reading of "*Kubla Khan*." The thing was eerie, extramundane. Through two long hours she tried

in vain to soothe the febrile excitement which seemed to eat into the very flesh of the child and to shrivel it before her eyes.

She was frightened from the first and finally she became terrified. Should she telephone for Dr. Koenig? He was so old that she hated to ask him to come out on a bitter-cold and slippery night. Bromides? Possibly, Dr. Koenig had cautioned her against administering them unless absolutely necessary. Yet neither Dr. Koenig nor bromides were required that night for Guido. Unexpectedly the door opened and Hauser slipped into the room, clad in a warm-looking, dark-red and black blanket-robe.

"What's the matter *now*?" he demanded, using his favorite phrase. "Do you know what time it is? It's long after midnight. I was asleep. But what does that matter? When his Royal Highness goes atraveling, the stars stand still in their courses, the earth stops revolving, and little men must lie awake!"

Guido stared stupidly at the apparition in the bath-robe, which now bowed, including woman and child in the mockery of the genuflection.

"May a mere mortal inquire whether your Highness intends to rave all night? If you desire, I'll fetch pencil and pad and act as your amanuensis. You may wish to publish some day."

A look of fright came into the child's face. His eyes lingered on Hauser's face in dread fascination.

Frau Ursula rose from the child's bed. She looked very lovely in an old-rose dressing gown of soft taffeta, trimmed with rich falls of creamy lace at the neck and wrists. The gown opened low upon the bosom, hinting of unrevealed splendors. She was roused past the point where prudence cloaks itself in meekness, and she rose before the man like an avenging angel—the pale aureole of honey-colored hair which framed the white, fiercely quiet face suggesting the analogy.

She was at the moment entirely magnificent in a purely feminine way, and her husband was by no means impervious to her charm. There was on his part a quickening of the respiration, a sharp intake of breath, a dilating of the nostrils. And, "Ursula" he breathed, the century-old stress of Adam in his voice.

"You will kindly leave my room at once!" said his wife. Her tone scorched, froze, annihilated. The man flushed to the roots of his hair. Without another word he turned and went from the room.

"Go to sleep now, Guido," she said, quietly.

To her surprise, Guido turned over on his side, and breathing deeply, fell asleep almost instantly. The shock which Hauser's unexpected advent had communicated to the boy, had resolved the nervous complex which had tormented him all afternoon and evening.

Noiselessly Frau Ursula turned down the gas. Then she fortified her room by shooting the bolt. But she could not sleep. An emotion lying half-way between anger and fright, an emotion, moreover, of which Guido for once did not enjoy the lion's share, impelled her to go to the dining-room to seek such comfort as an oil-stove and a lamp might give. To her amazement she found that both oil-stove and lamp had already been pressed into service. At the table, a stack of letters and bills before him, sat the husband.

"If you desire to be alone," he said, "I can go to the parlor." There was a new note in his voice.

The parlor was uninhabitable at one o'clock of a February morning, and she said so, adding, as a sudden impulse came to her:

"I would like to speak to you—if you can spare the time."

He laughed sardonically—the suggestion was so absurd. He rose and fetched her a chair and although she was eager to attribute the motive of mockery to his action, she was unable to detect in him any derisiveness, veiled or otherwise. This softened her. She began, pointlessly:

"I have not always been fair to you in the past."

"Nor I to you, Ursula," he retorted, gently.

Was he scenting her half-formed, half-chaotic impulse to make him what amends she could? Was he indulging in vagrant hopes? His wife contrarily stiffened into implacable animosity on the instant.

"We cannot possibly go on this way any longer," she resumed, a statement whose vagueness he again chose to interpret amiably.

"No," he said, meditatively, "we cannot. That is true."

"Erich," she leaned forward, impetuously, "at the time of our marriage——"

"Marriage?" He had relapsed into ironic bitterness and she became frightened, nervous, disheartened. She had intended to say to him she hardly knew what. Perhaps, subconsciously, she was more willing to place their union on an honest footing than she realized. But now that he had put her out, she began to blunder and stumble, and she found herself saying that which she was not at all certain she had intended to say when she began. She had hoped that he would help her—and he had not helped her. She was miserably ill at ease.

"Bargain, then," she said. "At the time of our marriage—I told you that if at any time you desired a divorce——" She hesitated and stopped. She was all awry. The muddle between them was hopeless—hopeless——

"Is that what you've come to say to me at one o'clock in the morning?" he roared, in sudden anger.

"Sssssh—you'll wake Guido," she cried, in alarm.

"D—n Guido," quoth the man. She was fair enough not to blame him for that, but that did not deter her from suggesting, craftily:

"If he wakens, he will keep you awake, too."

"Bah!" Hauser shoved himself back from the table. "The racket Guido made woke me it is true, but it's not Guido who is keeping me awake. It's you. Oh, Ursula!"

She shrank back abashed. And yet she knew how matters were with him. She was too fine-grained a woman not to realize that the man's fiercely denunciatory utterance of her name was a cry of the soul piercing the mask of the flesh, not a cry of the flesh itself. She had the grace to be thoroughly ashamed. Her innate goodness rose in revolt at the sight of her own handiwork. "This," her inner voice whispered, "is the result of Virtue militant and triumphant. What might Virtue conciliatory have made of this man?" And again the words, "Amends, amends, amends" roared in her ears like the turbulent song of a cascade.

"And you have the impudence to speak to me of divorce," he continued, brutally savage. "You pretend to think that I want a divorce. Well, I don't. You say we cannot go

on in the old way. I thought we couldn't. But we can and we shall and we will."

She had a quick temper and it flared up violently now. Knowing that her attitude had been one of conciliation and that at the end of a day which he had made a particularly trying one, she had a sense of having been rejected. She knew that it was preposterously unfair to nurture that sense, for she had rebuffed him so often that, without a very definite and candid advance on her part he could hardly be expected to envisage her change of sentiment.

She controlled her anger. It hardened and turned cold, and from its congealed midst divorce now really shone and glittered like a desirable jewel, like a bauble gleaming from the center of a huge cake of transparent ice.

"Why are you so opposed to a divorce?" she inquired, frigidly polite. "We have both profited by our bargain,"—she did not trip over the word as she had done before—"you have made a small fortune of your own, I have acclimatized myself. Well?"

"Your effrontery, Ursula, is sublime." He regarded her as if she were a new mechanism, something entirely unapprehended before. "You ask for an explanation of my unwillingness to divorce you. You shall have it. I'll consent to no divorce as a matter of pride." He flung her the scrap of truth for which she had begged as he might have flung a bone to a dog. "As a matter of pride," he repeated, defiantly.

"Pride is a low motive," she remarked, casually.

"Who are you to speak of low motives?" he answered. "Was it a high motive made you marry me?"

Frau Ursula held her pretty head very high. Her manner indicated that there yawned between them not mere earthly ravines and chasms but interstellar spaces.

"You absolutely refuse a divorce?" her voice was bland and chill, and it sent his temper to seething-point in a moment's time.

"Positively," he snorted.

Frau Ursula rose.

"Good-night," she said, sweetly.

Neither slept that night.

A message received the next morning advised Frau

Ursula that Frau Schuster was too ill to go out. Frau Ursula sighed, and sought out old Kaetchen, the maid of all work, in her stronghold the kitchen.

Old Kaetchen belonged to a type which would be a source of unadulterated joy to a Dickensonian dramatist, if the type were not debarred, by the very substance of its nature, from making its debut upon any stage not polyglot, or rather duoglot, for old Kaetchen spoke a jargon compounded of English and German so subtly and fearfully intermixed as to render her speech unintelligible excepting to persons who had a perfect command of both languages. It was a speech as amorphous and monstrous as Pennsylvania Dutch. From old Kaetchen's speech the patient observer would have deduced that the German language was deficient in such simple verbs as moving, sweeping, jumping; for, moved by some subtle instinct for assimilation, she had expelled these German verbs from her vocabulary and had substituted the English verbs instead, subjecting them, however, to the German method of inflection—suffixes, participles, prefixes and all. Some German sounds had suffered a similar expulsion, and certain English sounds, such as carpet, towel, sweeper, pitcher were transplanted bodily into sentences German in idiom, in grammatical construction and otherwise composed of German words. The hodge-podge resulting from this rape upon the maiden virtue of two tongues was indescribable, was as grotesque as a gargoyle and as repulsive as original sin. It was funny, too, funny with a Micawber-like, Falstaffian funniness. Guido, who had the ear of a purist, went into fits of ungovernable laughter when poor old Kaetchen, who in addition was as ponderous as Hebe and as solemn as a moping owl, narrated some of her adventures in this vernacular of her own. For Kaetchen, aged three score and three, had adventures. All her minor adventures revolved about her husband, who had also been the major adventure of her life. He was a longshoreman, and every morning at five-thirty ate a bowl of pea-soup and bacon for breakfast, which Kaetchen had cooked for him the fireless overnight. She had to cook it every night, for he would not eat warmed-over food. How she had managed to have pea-soup, which requires three hours' cooking, ready for him as a matutinal repast before the

invasion of fireless cookers, no one knew. Frau Ursula had variously tried to probe into the secret, but Kaetchen resolutely refused to divulge it, and pea-soup, at 5.30 A.M., was destined to remain a mystery as great as the Man in the Iron Mask. The secret of it would descend into the grave with herself.

Frau Ursula, in lieu of Frau Schuster, requested this human Tower of Babel to wait on Guido should he require anything before her return. It was necessary for her to look in at the store, as she had not been there at all the previous day, and she was going to stop at Dr. Koenig's office. She expected to be home for lunch, not before.

Old Kaetchen, who was good-nature personified, and loved Guido dearly, although he teased her so outrageously, promised to attend to everything. Her speech was even more hieroglyphic than usual, and Frau Ursula did not bother to unpuzzle all of it. Guido would be looked after—that was all that mattered.

CHAPTER II

“WELL,” said Dr. Koenig, coming forward to meet Frau Ursula with outstretched hand, *“Wie geht es, Frau Hauser?”* He spoke German, of course, as did the entire German contingent of Anasquoit. “Did Guido enjoy his outing?”

“Too much so, *Herr Doktor*, entirely too much so,” Frau Ursula replied, and acquainted him with the experiences of the night so far as they concerned his patient.

“Now, why,” she concluded, “should Guido go off at a tangent like that whenever anything happens to strike his fancy particularly?”

“Meine liebe Frau Hauser!” The portly old gentleman leaned far back in his comfortable swivel-chair. “You have every reason for gratitude that the boy’s emotional excess is caused only by pleasurable excitement. If it were otherwise, considering the pain the unfortunate little chap had endured in his brief life, we would have a lunatic on our hands. His keen zest for life, his joy in beauty where-soever found, is probably the fountain-head of the astonishing resilience he has shown in combating his disease.”

“Ach!” said Frau Ursula, “I never thought of it in that light.”

“I confess,” Dr. Koenig continued, “Guido is a sort of human puzzle. I mean the child, not his disease. The child has in him so very much less of the clodhopper than most children have, at his age; so much less than I had, so much less, I venture to assert, than his father had. Heredity and environment! Those, Frau Hauser, are the two magic keys which will some day unriddle us the Science of Humanity. Ethnologists tell us that the skulls of children born of alien parents on this soil differ radically from the skulls of their parents. What causes this? A different soil? A different climate? A different atmosphere?” Dr. Koenig made a rhetorical pause. He seemed strangely

excited. "We stand here on the threshold of a great mystery—perhaps the mystery of racial divergencies."

Frau Ursula was nonplused. There was about her nothing of the bluestocking, and she had no very clear perception of what the old physician was driving at.

"Now," the old man continued, "Guido differs so markedly in every salient characteristic—physical as well as mental—from you and from Mr. Hauser, that I am sorely perplexed to explain the phenomenon, unless I fall back upon a theory—a pet theory—which I framed some years ago."

Frau Ursula turned pale. Was she never to be allowed to forget the Synthesis? Here it was, wriggling its hated form into sight when she least expected it.

"Why," continued Dr. Koenig, "why, I ask, should this differentiation appear between parents and offspring born on the same soil? As your boy was. Hitherto I always believed that nativity on a new soil was an important factor. I believed that some subtle virtue inhered in American soil. I did indeed. But your boy upsets that theory. He upsets it, completely. It is shattered, and I must reconstruct it. Of course, transplantation——"

Frau Ursula heard no more, she was too intent on the Synthesis, which had crawled out into the full glare of consciousness. She could endure that clandestine presence no longer.

"Guido was born in America," she said, tentatively.

"Impossible!" Frau Ursula assumed that the doctor's ejaculation had been caused by certain discrepancies in chronology which must inevitably occur to him. But he was still engrossed by his theory. He could not immediately drag his attention away from it. "Impossible," he repeated, and she perceived that he was thinking aloud. "Nativity or transplantation, whatever it is, I believe, Frau Hauser, that there is some medicinal quality in American air, or in American soil, which changes men and women for the better. By that I do not mean a physical tonic, but a spiritual one. Yes," he exclaimed vehemently, as if bearing down a disputatious opponent, "I still believe it, I shall always believe it, but I've not been able to prove it." Suddenly he recollected himself. "Forgive me my little homily," he said, "but I'm a fanatic in my passion

for our country. There's not another like it. It's unique, supreme, unmatched. It is everything to everybody. And it's my religion."

"And part of mine," said Frau Ursula fervently.

"No," said the doctor, smiling, "I think it has no share in yours. Guido is your religion. But—dear lady! How *can* the child have been born here? He was two years old when you arrived in America—you called me in the very first night after coming to Anasquoit. I remember it perfectly. And you told me that evening that you had never been in America before."

"That is quite true," Frau Ursula assented, "Guido was born in America and I had never been here before. You see—Guido is not my child."

Dr. Koenig was stunned. He sat well forward in his chair, clutching the arms, staring hard and saying nothing. Frau Ursula regarded him, smiling broadly. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"That leaves my theory just where it was before! But, am I to hear about Guido? Is there anything to tell?"

"There is." And she related the entire story of Guido's parentage and birth and rescue, suppressing only the circumstances of her love for the boy's father. Last of all she told him about the Synthesis. She told the tale spasmodically, almost explosively. The story seemed to burst from her simultaneously at all points, like a disrupting shell. Dr. Koenig listened attentively. He seemed tremendously interested.

"A eugenic baby!" he exclaimed, finally.

"His father had consumption," said Frau Ursula, dryly.

"A spiritually eugenic baby," the Doctor amended. "To unify different and opposing currents of thought in one person. *Kollossal!*" he exclaimed, fervently, and added, "I hope I shall live long enough to see what it comes to. Weissmann, Madame, what did Weissmann say about it!"

Frau Ursula mistook the exclamation for a question. She had never heard of Weissmann, and said so. He had nothing to do with Guido.

"He has everything to do with Guido!" shouted Dr. Koenig. "Acquired traits cannot be transmitted! Ha! Can't they? H'm. H'm. I suppose political tendencies are innate after all—germ cells, not soma—H'm. Most

remarkable." Suddenly he ceased his ruminations. "You have not told me who the parents of the boy were!"

"His mother's name was Varvara Alexandrovna Vasalov; his father's Guido von Estritz."

The old physician struck his fist resoundingly upon the arm of his chair. "Fool!" he cried, apostrophizing himself. "Idiot! Were my eyes smitten with blindness? And the name Guido! Madame, I knew the lad's grandfather well. He made his escape from Berlin the same day I did. We met in Switzerland and we shipped for America in the same vessel. Guido von Estritz, myself, Kuno von der Linde, Hasbacher, Dr. Erbach and others whose names I have forgotten."

"Dr. Erbach, too?" Frau Ursula showed amazement. Dr. Erbach was a famous specialist in juvenile diseases, and at Dr. Koenig's suggestion, she had consulted him several years earlier about Gudio.

"Yes, Erbach, too, of course!" And he plunged into reminiscences of the Year Forty-Eight. "We belonged to the some organization in Berlin—the Social-Democratic Club, but we were not socialists in the sense that socialism carries to-day. What we believed in was Democracy—at least in a constitutional government, in a responsible ministry, in universal manhood suffrage. That was really all we were fighting for. And how we fought. How we struggled to disseminate the ideas which were to unite all the German states, which were to make them free. Ah, Madame! You and I spring from a great race, none can gainsay it, but there is lacking in that race something—I do not know just what—which keeps them enslaved."

"Enslaved!" Frau Ursula echoed, in surprise. "But Germany has a constitution to-day, has she not?"

"Oh, yes." Dr. Koenig laughed sardonically. "But Germany has neither a government representative of all of the people on a numerical basis, as we have, nor a ministry responsible to the people, as England has. Germany is not merely enslaved. She is content to remain enslaved. Her ancient idealism has turned to a meretricious, unwholesome reverence for caste, for power as power, and she has grown so fat-headed through material prosperity, that she has all but lost the power of independent thought. God pity Germany when the day of

reckoning some—the reckoning, I mean, which comes to all who sell their birthright for a mess of red pottage.”

Frau Ursula did not comprehend a word of all this. She was, as has been said before, not a clever woman excepting in purely feminine avocations, and in those she excelled. In a vague way she understood that Germany was being unfavorably criticised. She cared not one jot for Germany, and knew far less about the functions of the German government than she did about American institutions. But Guido von Estritz had thought the German government sacrosanct. She felt uncomfortable and unhappy.

“Von Estritz—*my* von Estritz for many years nurtured the hope that he might return to Germany,” Dr. Koenig continued.

“His son returned—and loved Germany and the German government,” said Frau Ursula, mildly.

“Loved the German government! Incredible. My dear madame, do you know what you are saying?” the old man fairly blazed with indignation.

Doggedly she repeated her statement to show that she did.

“Guido von Estritz’s son loved the Germany of to-day!” the old physician repeated. He seemed outraged and hurt. “I never heard anything so shocking in my life. It’s—why, it’s a sacrilege!” he cried.

Frau Ursula stared in bewilderment.

“Yet,” she interposed, weakly, “you say his father wished to return!”

“Yes, to fight!” the old man shouted. “To fight and to rouse others to fight. He did not return because he realized the uselessness of it all, because he realized that the German people were becoming drunk with conceit and greed and vaingloriousness.”

“But what—what did he want to fight for?” Frau Ursula demanded. This artless question, asked in good faith, had a remarkable effect upon the old physician. He shot from his seat, walked wildly about the room for a minute, and then, returning to his desk, began tossing paper-weights, scissors, penholders and other small articles about like an angry child. With a pen-knife he slashed vigorously at his desk-blotted.

"Madame," he said, "is your husband an American citizen?"

"He is," she replied, "and I was not content to be an American citizen by proxy—as my husband's wife; so I went to the trouble of taking out citizen papers of my own."

"Good," he cried, "and now tell me, why did you become an American citizen?"

Frau Ursula smiled at his adoption of the Socratic method of suasion. She replied:

"I became an American citizen because I love America. I love America because I am happy here. I am happy here because my individuality has had an opportunity to develop such as it would never have had abroad. She paused. Her mind glanced sharply at the past—the Mecklenburg days, the trip to Russia, the unholy bargain with Hauser. How she pitied and despised the poor weakling, who had made that bargain, welcomed it, embraced it. To-day, had she been free of the hated yoke, she would have feared no adventure and no enterprise. This much had America done for her.

"You have laid your finger on the vital point," Dr. Koenig retorted, almost ceremoniously. "America develops individuality because she allows the greatest personal freedom to the individual that comports with the personal freedom and the security of all other individuals. She tolerates neither the tyranny of monarchical nor the tyranny of socialistic ideas. And admitting all this, how can you say you admire Germany."

"I never said so!" Frau Ursula repudiated the charge indignantly. "I spoke of Guido's father. Because he loved Germany it does not follow by any means that I do. Germany means nothing to me to-day—less than nothing. I love America—more than I can say. And it was the silliest, most trivial little episode imaginable that first opened my eyes to the sterling democracy that permeates and invigorates American life." She talked glibly enough now, and she understood thoroughly what she was talking about. But all this concerned America—not Germany. That also America had done for her.

Dr. Koenig asked to be told about the "silliest episode."

She had, shortly after taking up her sojourn in Arasquoit, met her washerwoman in the street. The woman

stopped her to inquire after Guido's health. Frau Ursula, who at this time was still permeated with the spirit of caste, was surprised and annoyed by the woman's audacity. For a moment she had been tempted to walk around the woman, who had blocked her progress, and ignoring her, leave her unanswered. Her sound common sense, perhaps her kind-heartedness triumphed over these atavistic prejudices. She saw from the woman's manner that no disrespect was intended. She was neither servile nor insolent. She was just one human being feeling human interest and compassion in another human being and inquiring about him of a third human being.

In Germany, not only would the woman not have dared to address her mistress on the street, but the mistress would not have dared to address her help.

And so, through a haphazard meeting in the street with a woman in a menial position, there was visualized for Frau Ursula the humanizing democracy of America. She felt that the gods sometimes choose strange instruments and singular avenues of approach for our conversion and spiritual consecration.

"But, now," she continued, "perceive the predicament in which I find myself. Although I made no definite promise to Guido's mother concerning his education, I feel a delicacy, a haunting sense of obligation that I must carry out her wishes. That means, of course, that if the Synthetic Experiment is to have a fair trial, Guido must not be subjected to direct or indirect influence in any way, not in politics and not in religion. The question is—how far am I to carry this policy of No-Bias? If I teach him to love this country, OUR country, as I would like to do, and as I feel it incumbent to do, am I then untrue to the spirit of the Synthesis by breeding in him a preferential attitude toward Democratic institutions?"

"Nonsense!" the honest old practitioner exclaimed. "Nonsense! You just go ahead and teach him to love America as much as ever he can. If you don't, I will."

"But you haven't answered my question—you have evaded it," Frau Ursula reminded him. "Will not the value of the experiment in spiritual eugenics, in the Political Synthesis, be very materially impaired thereby?"

"Ha," laughed Dr. Koenig. "You think you've tripped me."

I'm not sure that you haven't. I'm not sure you have. I'm not sure there isn't a connection between the two—between the Political Synthesis and American democracy. The thought is vapory, delicate as a dew-drop, I would need a spider's web as a seine in which to drag it carefully into my laboratory.

"Of course," said Frau Ursula, "I am going to instill in Guido's mind a wholesome respect for American law, all the more so as religious instruction is prohibited."

"How is that?" Dr. Koenig inquired. "I myself am a freethinker, but there are temperaments for whom a pronouncedly teleological conception of the Why and Wherefore of Things is necessary. Why then no religion?"

"Religion colors the mind, and Guido's mind is to retain its virgin hue of white," said Frau Ursula, a little sarcastically. "In all things. He is to judge for himself in everything."

Dr. Koenig was aghast.

"The boy is exceptional, of course," he said, "but he will have to be quite prodigiously exceptional, you know, if this experiment is to work out at all. I confess—well, it's staggering. I'm tremendously intrigued. I'm fascinated. There are so many religions—if his mind is so fashioned that he requires a religion as a working theory of the Universe, there is no saying what will happen. There's Confucius; there's Toaism; there's Shinto; there are the Adventists; there—what's the use of enumerating. There's no saying which will arrest the attention of our young Andalusian cockerel at the psychological moment. For the religious impulse, like the sexual, has its nadir and its zenith. It all depends. It all depends. Madame, you have a task before you."

Frau Ursula sighed. She was sufficiently aware of the fact without being reminded of it.

"To educate a child without any definite bias in ethics, religion, politics!" Dr. Koenig laughed, immoderately. It occurred to him for the first time that Thalia, as well as Melpomene, was to have a hand in the rearing of the synthetic child. He was still laughing, when he resumed.

"Perhaps," he said, "perhaps he will synthesize religions and ethics as well as politics. He may reconcile the Real Presence with the theory of Commemorative Communion.

He may jumble together Salvation by Grace and Good Deeds. He may perceive a dual nature in God and declare that Jesus and Beelzebub are merely Christian cognomens for Ahriman and Ormuzd. He may see in Theosophy a Christianizing and vindication of the Egyptian belief in transmigration. He laughed again, grimly. "A synthetized religion! The outcome might be cannibalism linked to prohibition."

"You seem amused," said Frau Ursula, a little curtly.

"Amused! *Aber liebe*, Frau Hauser! I am entertained. More entertained than I have been in years. And I am very much concerned. It's a dangerous experiment, terribly dangerous, if you intend fulfilling it to the letter."

"I'm going to play fair," said Frau Ursula. "It is detestable nonsense, I suppose. Still, she was his mother. And I have faith in the boy's nature. I do not agree with you in thinking the experiment dangerous."

"Well, I don't see—I say it frankly—how you are going to bring up a child without giving some direction to his mental and moral bent," the old physician said, oracularly. "It cannot be done. Unless you bring him up on a desert island. Man juxtaposed to man evolves a social scheme and a religion, however crude. And the desert island has its drawbacks, too. The philosopher, like the artist requires a medium. To give the experiment a fair test, the issue should be fairly presented to the child. Yes—" the old man was warming to the theme, "Yes, that will be the only way."

"But that is precisely what his mother did not wish," said Frau Ursula, crossly. "He is to know nothing about the Political Synthesis and his Destiny and that he is not my child before he is twenty-one."

"H'm," grunted the old physician.

"I am determined, however," said Frau Ursula, "to teach him the difference between right and wrong in no uncertain way. As to right conduct, at least, there can be no difference of opinion."

"The conception of what is right and wrong depends largely on geographical location," said the Doctor slyly. "So you can't do that, either, if there is really to be no bias. In India, they marry their girls off at eleven and twelve. The Book of Mormon makes polygamy obligatory, and the advocates of that religion submit very plausible reasons for the

practice—physiologically plausible, I mean.” Frau Ursula arched her eye-brows and averted her eyes. Dr. Koenig hemmed and hawed a moment, realizing that he had slightly offended, and continued, “And the Germans, dear lady, men and women of the New Empire whose veins bound the self-same blood as yours and mine, consider war an ennobling pursuit, a sacred occupation, the only one suitable to a man of birth.”

“Alas, yes,” Frau Ursula assented. She thought of the *Rittergutsbesitzer* and sighed. “I dare say you are right, *Herr Doktor*. I’m in a worse quandary than before. I really do not know what to do. I shall have to reconsider the entire problem. I don’t suppose,” she added, abruptly, “that Guido has inherited his mother’s homicidal mania. Well, at any rate, he’s beyond reach of her influence. I imagine she is dead.”

“Not necessarily,” said Dr. Koenig, “if they have retaken her—as they doubtless did, ultimately—she is probably still alive. Russia does not execute, she tortures, and exiles and imprisons. And she escaped from Siberia before.”

Frau Ursula rose.

“I am sure she is dead,” she said, with an air of finality.

“I believe you wish it?”

“I do indeed, with all my heart,” Frau Ursula replied, composedly.

The talk with Dr. Koenig had consumed considerable time, and Frau Ursula, on consulting her watch, was startled to see that the better part of the morning was gone. And she had not yet been to the store. Well, she would have to attend to that in the afternoon.

She hurried home.

Guido was greatly distressed on learning, after lunch, that his mother was going out again. He begged, pleaded, cajoled, used all the innocent wiles—even flattery—of childhood to prevent her departure. As a last desperate endeavor he entreated her to tell him a tale of her childhood.

“Tell me about the big white *Kachelofen* in which you baked the apples and potatoes to hold in your muff when you went sleigh-riding!”

“You’ve heard all about that at least a dozen times.”

“Tell me about the horrid Finnish governess you had, who made you catch spiders for her sandwiches!”

"You know that story by rote."

"Tell me," his face was pitifully white and drawn after his bad night, "Tell me about your great-grandparents, who were not allowed to call their parents *"Du!"*"

"Guido, those old storeis—"

"Mother, I know, I know! I'm only begging you to tell me a story to keep you here, near me. I don't care a rap about the story. I don't care a rap whether you talk to me or not. Only, stay home—"

Guido, darling, I cannot. Don't you think, dearest, I would rather stay home with my little lad than rummage through a restaurant kitchen?"

"Can I get up at least?"

"Darling son, no. After yesterday—your back is very tired, you told me."

"I know. Mother, I think it must have been horrid to call your parents—at least your mother—'*Sie.*' I couldn't call you '*Sie.*' I'd just have to call you '*Du.*' Mother, that's one thing I do not like about English, calling everybody—strangers and one's mother—'*you.*'"

"The Quakers use '*thee*' in addressing each other."

"Yes, but they say '*thee*' to everybody. So it comes to the same thing. I don't like that about English."

"If you knew English only you would never think about it. Lots of mothers and little children say '*you*' to each other and love each other as much as can be. And now—" she disengaged herself casually from the boy's convulsive clasp, for he had encircled her neck with his thin arms, and was lying against her heart, "now, my pet, I must go."

The child fell back limply among the pillows.

"The English-speaking mothers may love their little boys as much as can be, as much as you love," he said truculently, "but I am convinced that no little English-speaking boy loves his mother quite as much as I love you."

He said it without anger, without heat, without bitterness. He had not meant to be unkind or to hurt. The very unconsciousness of the comparison indicating the measure of her love for him and his love for her was what made his statement so damning. The woman gave a sharp gasp of pain. Two bright red spots appeared on either cheek. Almost she yielded now, but her sense of duty—and fear of further irritating her husband—stiffened her purpose and her will.

Mechanically she began to gather up the books which lay scattered about the bed.

"Mother, can't I keep the books?"

"You've read all morning."

"Just one—as company—I'll be so lonely without anyone, without even a book."

"Which?" she asked quietly.

He wavered.

"Perhaps I'd better not keep any," he said, with downright honesty. "I might forget—and read."

"I think," she said gently, that you are going to take a *Nachmittagsschlaefchen*. You will feel so much better after a nap. Then, when Otto comes, you will be bright and fresh. And perhaps you can sit up a little after I get home."

"All right, Mother. I'll try to sleep. I will, honest. But, in case I wake before half past three—just one book?"

"Which—?"

His answer startled her as his answer had a habit of doing.

"The dictionary, Mother."

"The dictionary! Do you want to read that?"

"Just dip into it, if you don't mind."

"You may read the dictionary all night and all day. Nothing in that to excite you."

Rich in wisdom and in love as she was, she did not realize that she was leaving the child the most inebriating book of all.

"Did you want the German or the English dictionary, Guido?" she asked, standing at the opening book-case.

"The English, of course."

She fetched it for him, asking, curiously,

"Why—of course?"

"What sense would there be in reading the German *Diktionaer*," the child replied sharply. "I know the meaning of pretty nearly every German word I hear or read. When I don't know what it means it's a French word—not a German word at all—or a technical word."

"I see," said his mother, meekly. "I am glad that you wish to enlarge your English vocabulary, Guido. I was really afraid, before, from what you said, that you had taken a dislike to English, and that would never do. For although we speak German among ourselves, because it comes more

easily to us, you must always remember that English is the language of our own country. More than that. It is a rarely beautiful and rich language. It boasts of the greatest modern literature in the world. It has the most comprehensive vocabulary of any language, ancient or modern. If I could do as I pleased, I would have an English governess for you—then you would acquire a pure English as well as a pure German.”

The child had listened in apparent amazement.

“You misunderstood me, Mother,” he said. “There’s just the one single, solitary thing I do not like about the English, and nothing that you or anyone else can say can change that.” The small thin face had become terribly set and determined. He had, it was easy to see, quite irrevocably made up his mind, and perhaps, in spite of her voluble admonishment, since German was her native tongue and the only language which she spoke with perfect fluency, it pleased her that this was so.

Guido continued:

“But English! Why I love it, I adore it! I can’t exactly explain how I feel off-hand. It’s like this. English is Sunday clothes and patent leather pumps; German is comfortable corduroy and sneakers.”

She was taken aback by the unusual metaphor. Under cover of it, for Guido was still pondering the subject, she made her escape.

He did not take the cat-nap which his mother had recommended, although he tried very hard. But the urgent business which he had in hand kept him awake.

His mother’s words had raised a very serious question in his mind.

Which was dearer to him, German or English?

Which?

There was, first of all, German. Until he was five years old he had spoken no English whatever, excepting the one sentence, taught him parrot fashion, “George Washington was the Father of his Country.” And because German was the first language which he had spoken, it came naturally both to tongue and ear. His German compositions were always virtually letter-perfect, frequently showing no vestige of the blasting red ink in which corrections were made. And they were written without effort, without any straining

after effect. His English compositions, on the other hand, though he labored over them valiantly, were honeycombed and burrowed by the blighting crimson. And always, quite inevitably, whether in speech or in print, English seemed a little unnatural, a little stilted. Yet it held at the same time an elusive, tantalizing charm like the fragrance from a flower hidden behind a stone wall.

One consolation only remained. Otto had informed him that he, Guido, used more polysyllables in his English prose work than any other boy—or girl—in the class. Otto knew, because he and Eddie Erdman during recess had one day taken the pains to read through the compositions of the handful of pupils who counted, for the sole purpose of noting elephantine words, and had unanimously, although grudgingly, awarded Guido the palm. As there was in the class a boy by the name of Bob Hastings, who was a "real" American, not a spurious American, like themselves, Guido felt that his pride in wielding the Polysyllabic Sceptre of his class was thrice justified.

For he would dearly have loved to excel in the use of English, but the truth is, he was a little afraid of it—it abounded in such an overwhelming number of words which no one ever seemed to use. How, then, did these words maintain their places in the Dictionary? Or were there in England, perhaps, or in Boston, which was literary, or in Philadelphia, which was old, men and women who spoke really and truly dictionary English? He didn't believe it. Neither did Otto. And both were at loss to explain the legion of splendid idlers with which the Dictionary was tenanted.

On the whole, Guido was unfeignedly glad that, instead of being dispossessed, they were still comfortably housed. Like human idlers, they were so attractive and so fascinating that merely to look occasionally at these Beau Brummels of the world of print, was an undeniable privilege and pleasure.

So that, in asking for the dictionary, he had been impelled not so much by a desire to benefit his mind, as by a wish for facile entertainment.

The truth of the matter is this youngster of eleven was in love with words. He loved them not so much for the delicate shades of meaning achievable by their means, as for

their sound, and for their appearance—their appearance, in fact, even more than their sound, for in his silent pronunciation at this early stage of his career he was often utterly at sea.

Words there were which steeped his linguistic sense in such delight that he would repeat them over and over to himself, deriving as much pleasure from the exercise as he would have derived from stroking a pet dog or cat. Some old English names, like Tewksbury, Marlborough, Clarendon, made his heart burn and his temples throb in much the same way as did the sonorous roar of the organ on the few occasions when he had been taken to church. Gloucester looked beautiful; it was a disillusionment to learn, as he did from the German spelling of the word in Schiller's "Mary Stuart" that it was pronounced plain "Gloster." And there was one English word which set him frantic with delight whenever he pronounced it to himself, which, indeed, had the identical effect upon him that one of Schumann's *Lieder* had when his mother played them for him. The word was "Canterbury." And as long as he lived, long after childhood and youth were passed, long after English had become the every-day habit and German unfamiliar from disuse, that word, especially when associated with "pilgrims," or "cathedral," or "bells," never failed to intone in his soul one of those silent anthems from which the pure-minded derive such a mystic, religious exaltation.

Humbler denizens of the world of words filled him with a pleasure almost as keen. There was "poignant" for instance, which was exactly what it seemed to be; and "phantom" so delightfully thrilling and elusive; and "marjoram," which was so gentle and delicately aromatic that the rose should have been renamed by it. For hours he could amuse himself with words which pleased him, letting his tongue play with them, his eye caress them.

German words also there were, which he loved, but, being more familiar with them, they failed to exert the same glamour and fascination. Yet his familiarity did not blind him into their relative merit. Thus, he thought "*Floete*" a much finer word than "flute"; "*Harfe*" seemed more evanescently suggestive than "harp"; "*Herzog*" was more magnificent, more feudal and princely than "duke."

He had heard someone speak of the universal tongues of

Esperanto and Volapük. He thought it would be a fine thing to extract from each language the most appropriate words, and with this building material to construct an ideal tongue for all mankind. He desired to be the Luther Burbank of languages.

Suddenly a passion for authorship seized him. He scribbled busily for a while, writing intently, correcting, re-writing, a juvenile Balzac in his frenzied effort for style. The room was very quiet. Presently he became drowsy. He flung pencil and paper away, and fixed his attention on the dream-language that was to be, to which, temporarily, he had given the name of "Perfecto." Then, with gentle suddenness, he fell asleep.

He was awakened by the ringing of the door-bell—once, twice, thrice!

Old Kaetchen's creaking step, accompanied by a gentle grumbling rumble which was chronic with her when summoned from the kitchen, was heard in the hall. There was the sound of a door swinging open, and immediately the apartment was filled with wild tumult. A tempest seemed to roll along the hall, scattering stone and iron on its way. There were tremendous sounds, stupendous reverberations. Then the door to Guido's bedroom was flung open and Otto, Otto who was responsible for all this noise, pounded into the room, wildly swinging strapped books and pencil-case, which thwacked where they listed, a habit which together with the thumping bumps with which he lumbered along, accounted for the furore which had heralded his appearance.

"Hullo," he cried bluffly. Among themselves the boys spoke English. The door banged shut.

Guido, freshly awakened, his nerves horribly rasped, said:

"How do you do, Otto. I wonder how you manage to make so much noise." Then, enviously, "I couldn't do it in a hundred years." Noise seemed to him a concomitant of health, seemed to stand for so many of the things he hadn't had, and which, occasionally, he wished he had not missed.

"Of course you couldn't, you poor kid," said Otto. "How d'ye feel to-day?"

He himself was the picture of health, a shock-headed,

rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed and fair-haired rough-and-tumble boy.

"I'm fine," said Guido, shortly.

"That's good," said Otto, indifferently. "Wish you'd been in school to-day. We had a grand time. In the history class we had all about Sedan."

"Sedan—what's that?"

"Huh—much you know, don't you?" Otto taunted his friend.

"Well, I bet you didn't know before to-day, either," retorted Guido.

"I didn't? Didn't I, though. My father's a good patriot. We've got Bismarck's picture right alongside of Lincoln's in the dining-room. I'm named for Bismarck. So there."

A dull anger stirred in Guido. Otto, usually the most good-humored of companions, became insufferably overbearing whenever he began to talk Bismarck, which he did quite frequently. Otto's father, Herr Baumgarten, was one of those Germans who are Bismarck-fanatics, and through him his little son had acquired a goodly lot of information, all of it flattering, of course, about the German Machiavelli.

"My, ain't you dumb," said Otto, using a solecism greatly in vogue in Anasquoit where it was the fashion to use the word "dumb" not in its true significance but as an equivalent of the German "*dumm*," meaning stupid.

"Well, anyhow, I'm not so silly as to say 'dumb' when I mean stupid," Guido retorted, hotly.

"Oh, you with your fine English," Otto jeered, thinking that such affectation needed taking down. "Say, haven't you been told anything a-tall about Bismarck?" And he plunged into an explanation of a sort concerning Bismarck's place in history. It was not very coherent, and it bristled with eulogies of military glory.

"Bismarck doesn't interest me in the least," Guido spoke up suddenly.

"But it's your lesson for to-morrow," said Otto, grinning.

"I don't care. I hate hearing about war. They do an awful lot of fighting in Europe."

"Well, don't we?" Otto flung back. "We had the Revolution, and the Civil War, didn't we? And the War with Spain."

"Well, when we fight, we always have some bully good reason for it," Guido retorted, with rising bellicoseness.

"So do they—at least the Germans have."

"I'm not sure. I don't like Germany—much. Seems to me Germany alone has got enough kings and dukes and things to stock a menagerie with. Why don't they get rid of all that junk and start right the way we did?"

Otto appeared crestfallen.

"Well, to say the truth, I haven't got much use for emperors and kings myself," he admitted. "But my farder, and the *Herr Direktor* to-day, they don't seem to think of that a-tall. And my farder says Bismarck was the greatest statesman that ever lived."

"Huh!" said Guido, sitting bolt upright in bed, and waving his hands dramatically. "How about Washington? How about Lincoln? Huh!"

"My farder says," Otto responded, "that Lincoln was the greatest *man* that ever lived."

But Guido was not entirely appeased.

"And Washington?" he asked, suspiciously.

"My farder says Washington was the *finest* man that ever lived."

Guido pondered these delicate distinctions for a moment. Then he demanded with that alert, searching eagerness for uncomprehended things which was one of the basic traits of his character:

"Otto, do you understand just what your father meant by all that?"

"I never thought about it," honest Otto replied. He was quite ready, evidently, to accept his father's opinions ready-made, and to infuse them bodily, without question or parley, into the fabric of his own mind.

"Well, you'd better think about it, once," said Guido, blissfully unaware that he was guilty of a barbarism which was close kith and kin to the one with which he had taunted his friend a moment before.

"My farder says," Otto launched forth again, "that the Germans are the greatest race on earth."

"That's silly," said Guido.

"The *Herr Direktor* said so, too."

"It's silly all the same."

"Ooooooh!" Otto pretended to be scandalized.

"My mother says all races—all white races—are pretty nearly equally good," Guido triumphantly delivered himself.

"Women don't know as much as men," remarked the irrepressible Otto. At this Guido flew into a Berserker rage.

"That may be so in your home," he cried, "but not in ours. My mother knows as much as any man."

Poor Otto became frightened. His own mother never tired of enjoining him not to quarrel with Guido, not to hit him, not to irritate him, not to tease him. He had lurid visions of Guido lying stark and still in his coffin as the up-shot of their wrangle. Chills of apprehension traversed his boyish spine.

"Don't get so mad, Guido," he said, soothingly. "I'm not so dumb as not to know that your mother's a wonder. Sure thing. She does know as much as most men. My father says she's an emancipated woman."

"Emancipated!" Here was a poser. Guido liked the tang of the word. But he had not the remotest conception of its meaning, though, since its flavor was so agreeable both to the ear and to the tongue, it was inconceivable that it conveyed either censure or contempt. Nevertheless, his mortification was great. Here was Otto, who habitually and deliberately offended by using such monstrosities as "dumb" and "gummi-shoes" and "going on a party" and a lot of other amorphous expressions unclassifiable as German or English or Perfecto, springing a long word on him, Guido, which Guido had never heard of before.

Guido felt aggrieved, shocked and outraged. In his mind's eye he saw his throne as Polysyllabic King tottering, and to fall from that proud eminence would be calamity of the first magnitude. He was aware of a sudden feeling of good-fellowship, of neighborliness, of comprehending compassion for the crowned heads of Europe. Humanly, if not politically, there was some excuse for not chopping off all their heads at one fell blow, as he had suggested a few moments ago. He felt that his new self-knowledge, involving his abysmal ignorance, had had a chastening effect on his ethics, a broadening effect upon his character. He rejoiced in this and felt virtuous.

By no means must he let Otto perceive how matters really stood, and he wrapped himself in an air of lofty frigidity. Such dissemblers are the best of us.

"Otto," he said, impressively, "my mother is a very extraordinary woman." He gave each syllable of "extraordinary" its full value, as if it had been a hyphenated word.

"Sure thing," said Otto. "My mother says your mother was a princess or something on the other side. Was she?"

"Of course not," Guido retorted, indignantly. His ancient prejudice against royalty had revived. It was scandalous of Otto to suggest such a taint in his blood.

Huh!" said Otto. "If she wasn't a princess, she was a countess or a baroness, and that's almost as fine."

"Fine!" Guido echoed, weakly.

"Sure," said Otto. "Why did your mother ever come here, anyhow, Guido?"

"I suppose because she loved this country," Guido replied. But he spoke without conviction. He was not sure—never having been told why his mother had come to America.

"Huh!" Otto retorted, "you're just making that up. Nobody comes to America because they love this country. If they're poor in Germany they come because they think they are going to get rich here. Silly simps! And if they are rich in Germany they don't come here unless they lose their money, or because they've killed someone or robbed someone and have to clear out."

"Well, I'm quite sure that my mother didn't kill anyone or rob anyone," Guido retorted, with scathing disdain.

"No, of course not," Otto cheerfully assented. "She might have if she'd been a man, but German ladies don't do such things. My farder says American ladies have too much liberty, and that makes them do such foolish things. My farder says Americans make believe that they are better than other people, but they're not. My farder says it's a good thing so many Germans come to this country, otherwise it would come on the dog." The last phrase, needless to point out, was yet another specimen from Otto's Jekyll and Hyde collection of words and phrases. "My farder says——" and he droned on interminably. According to Otto's father, if his scion was to be believed, Americans and Englishmen were the possessors of all the blackguardly qualities in the calendar, while all noble, sterling qualities of heart and mind were the property of the German race.

A dull irritation stirred in Guido. Something of the sort

he had heard his own father expound, but only sporadically, when things went wrong in business. As a rule it was "America is good enough for me" with Hauser. And why not? Since America had been so overwhelmingly good to him at least in a financial way. But Otto and Otto's father continually harped on the same string. There was linked to the irritation against Otto another emotion which Guido could not name because it was new to him. He had never experienced it before. It warmed his heart and his blood and, unfortunately, his brain. He felt very very angry, but his anger seemed merely to overlap and enfold the other, deeper, more subtle emotion. It was elemental, went down to the roots of his being, was part of himself, was perhaps himself. He could not tell. And he was far too angry and too deeply moved to waste time or energy in self-analysis. His introspective powers were for the moment paralyzed.

And all this pent-up magnificence could find to say was:

"It's rotten to talk like that."

"It's my farder that talks like that!" Otto's round, boyish face turned a deep brick-red. His blue eyes shone like blue bells from that surrounding redness.

"Can't help it, it's rotten all the same."

Guido repeated the offensive words, knowing as certainly as any potentate who signs a provocative ultimatum, that it meant war—war with Otto. He had forgotten all about his professed dislike for that ancient avocation of mankind. He was willing to fight not merely his beloved Otto, but ten boys, a hundred boys, a thousand boys if they would dare to repeat in his hearing the sentiments he had so uneuphemistically pronounced "rotten."

His youthful pacifism had gone to pieces upon the rock of principle.

But of the deeper significance of what was transpiring in his soul he, of course, glimpsed nothing.

As the proscribed words were repeated, Otto scrambled to his feet. To him it was a personal quarrel—tribal, possibly, since his father's words had been stigmatized as "rotten." Of the deeper significance of the quarrel, he, too, opined nought.

He ran his brown fingers through his fair hair, as he had a habit of doing before resorting to the use of his compe-

tent fists. His fighting blood was up. He had forgotten his mother's admonishments and Guido's weak back.

Guido, bristling, regarded him belligerent over the footboard of the bed.

"I'm too weak to get out of bed alone," he said, "but if you'll just step around here, where I can reach you, I'll fight you in bed."

The superb absurdity of it! The Spirit of '76 did not throw down the gauntlet more blithely.

Slowly, but not unwillingly, Otto came around to the side of the bed. He had fully mobilized. His head was lowered, as for a charge, his fists were clenched and villainous-looking. Guido faced him, also with clenched fists. The flush which tinged his face had not communicated itself to his hands. They were, as always, the color of wax, and seemed as frail and as brittle as that commodity, and the knuckles showed an unhealthy blue-white. At sight of those pitifully fragile hands, all of Otto's wrath was extinguished. He was, in spite of his silly braggadocio a genuinely kind-hearted lad, and he loved Guido with a sincerity and a devotion which never wavered. He unclenched his fists, and, throwing back his head, laughed heartily.

"You silly boob," he said, "you poor simp, did you really think I'd fight you! Why, if I struck you I'd break you to pieces, to little tiny bits."

Tears of humiliation stood in Guido's eyes.

"You shan't make fun of me because I'm sick," he cried, "you shall fight me, you shall!"

"Aw, forget it," said Otto, composedly. "I wasn't laughing at you. Honest Injun. But just imagine what 'ud happen if my big paw landed on your little lady-like hands."

This though kindly meant, did not assuage the wound it was intended to heal. It had, in fact, a contrary effect. Guido uttered a sound, which, since he had spent two entire years in bed, far from the madding world of fights and brawls, was really a very fair imitation of the Indian yell with which school boys give battle.

"Oh, shut your face, will you?" Otto exclaimed. He was becoming alarmed by the storm he had raised but could not quell.

Then something happened which amazed Guido as much as it amazed Otto—perhaps more. Guido's alabaster-white

hand shot out, and aiming true crashed resonantly upon Otto's nose, causing a profuse inundation.

"Well, I never!" Otto ejaculated, spitting the blood out of his mouth and fumbling for his handkerchief. He was overwhelmed with amazement. It never occurred to him to strike back. Now that he again envisaged the invalidism of his friend, he would as soon have thought of striking back at his baby sister if she, in a spurt of infant fury, had attempted a similar outrage and had, by a similar miracle, drawn blood.

"Well, I never," he blurted out again, still blowing and puffing, to avoid swallowing the blood which was streaming from his nose. He had found his handkerchief at last, the typical school-boy's handkerchief, much smirched by too close an association with keys, pencils, sticky candies and general griminess.

"Well, I never," he repeated once more, when, at last, his blood was staunched.

It did not occur to him that the blow was a foul blow, but this aspect of the assault had presented itself with lightning-like rapidity to Guido's quicker intelligence.

His anger had given way to shame, his indignation to a sense of burning self-loathing. He had struck Otto, Otto, so kind, so true, so staunch; Otto, who had lowered his hands and had tried to make up.

"Otto," he cried, "I'm a beast. Oh, forgive me. Please, please forgive me."

"Don't be a goose," said Otto, unmindful of genders, and flecking away the last dribblets of blood from his abused nose and jowl. "It didn't hurt. You were fearf'ly quick. A quick blow like that don't hurt no more'n a quick cut. You oughter know that much."

"But you weren't expecting it," Guido murmured, still wallowing in shame.

"That's why it didn't hurt, I'm telling you, you duffer," Otto rejoined. "Stop your yowling, won't you?" For unashamedly, Guido had broken into sobs.

"I can't help it," sobbed Guido, "you're always so go-go-go-good to me, and I'm such a little beast!"

Stoically Otto sat down near the bed, resolved to see the affair through, since, apparently, there was nothing else to do.

Guido, still sobbing, and determined upon the *amende honorable*, said:

"Otto, I don't know what 'emancipated' means."

Self-abasement, for a Polysyllabic King, could go no further.

Otto, regarding his friend reflectively, rejoined, apparently quite unmoved by the latter's magnanimity:

"Neither do I."

Then, through some secret, unfathomable channel of the soul Guido's self-respect came oozing back. But his sobbing continued. He was almost hysterical.

"For heaven' sake," quoth Otto sternly, "quit that yelping. Will you now? I tell you I don't care a hang about your making my nose bleed. But if you are going to howl yourself sick, like a sissy, my mudder'll tell my farder, and he'll lick me within an inch of my life. Now, will you stop?"

Guido stopped. But, although he was now entirely overwhelmed by Otto's generosity, he could not help saying, a moment later:

"But don't you go running Americans down again, like you did before."

"I should worry," rejoined Otto. "We ain't Americans. We're Germans."

"Yes," Guido assented in good faith. "We're Germans. But America is our country. At least it's mine. So there."

That evening Guido confided to his mother the secret of his incipient authorship. He produced the magic document upon which he had labored in the afternoon, and handed it to her.

This is what Frau Ursula read:—

"An antiquated man with a face like a pilkin lived on a pippin farm where roans also were grown in a covert near a causeway swung from a halyard across a weir and domesticated with him——"

Frau Ursula gulped convulsively and broke into a spasm of coughing.

"Did you take cold yesterday, Mother?" Guido inquired. Truth to tell he spoke a little impatiently. For how dared a mere cough interrupt his mother's enjoyment of her son's first independent excursion into English prose?

Frau Ursula presented a serious face to the youngster

when she spoke. The heroism of motherhood, even vicarious motherhood such as hers, knows no bounds.

"Guido," she said, "I do not doubt it is very beautiful. But you know, my son, I am but an indifferent English scholar, and my vocabulary is entirely inadequate for the comprehension of your remarkable diction. My pet, will you do this for me? To-morrow write me out a definition—copied from the dictionary, of each of the words which I am going to underline."

Guido, not very well pleased with a task which smacked of being-kept-in-after-school procedure, consented with poor grace. Years elapsed before the true reason of his mother's strange request became clear to him. His compliance with it, however, bore immediate fruit as she had meant it should do. It taught him not to use words the meaning of which was hazy and obscure.

CHAPTER III

FRAU SCHUSTER returned the next day, looking dingier and more dilapidated and less palatable than ever. By no stretch of the imagination could one fancy her as ever having been a light-hearted, light-footed young girl, who went to picnics and danced at weddings and deprived daisies ruthlessly of their petals to see whether her love was errant or true. None, that is, excepting a warm-hearted child.

For Guido loved her. When she told him wonderful stories of her childhood in far-away Germany, stories almost as entrancing as those which his mother told him of her young days, he thought of her in terms of a contemporary. There was, of course, a marked difference between the tales of Frau Schuster's youth and his mother's juvenile recollections. His mother's childhood had been spent in the lap of luxury, about which hovered nursery governesses and maids, and coachmen and footmen and gardeners galore. Frau Schuster, on the other hand, had been the youngest of thirteen children, born to a poor country vicar. On the children's birthdays, as a great treat, they had chocolate soup for supper, and on her father's birthday the merry little tribe had been regaled with *Karpfen mit Rosinen*, and *Weissbiersuppe*, and *Zwetschkuchen*, delicacies whose charm, as Frau Schuster willingly admitted, were greatly impaired when translated into an English-speaking world as carp with raisins, beer soup and plum cake. But they had tasted excellently well in Germany, she asseverated, and plum-cake, as Guido knew for himself, was just as tasty in America as in Germany, or would have been, if American plums had been as good as German plums. At this point of her yarn, overcome by the pathos of her reminiscences, the poor old soul would sadly shake her head. There was no doubt, she would say with the utmost gravity, and was as sincere in this as in all things, that the soil about the

vicarage of the *Herr Pastor* Blasewinkel in Herrgottsau, Thuringen, was peculiarly well adapted to the growing of plums. There never were and never would be the world over plums with such a flavor.

The simple-hearted old woman did not suspect that the especial flavor of those plums was due to the simple, hearty kindness which had surrounded her childhood and the life of her parents, and which had made of the Blasewinkel vicarage, in spite of the energetic frugality which thirteen mouths to feed made imperative, a little paradise.

Nor did the little lad to whom she told these tales of gastronomic enjoyment suspect it. He would lean back in his pillows with a sigh of vast content, and vow that when he was a man and had lots of money as grown-ups always had, he would go back to Germany with Frau Schuster and they would seek out the vicarage at Herrgottsau, and if necessary buy it, and then they would eat *Weissbiersuppe*, and *Karpfen mit Rosinen* and *Zwetchgenkuchen* not once a year but every day while carp were in season and the plum preserves on the long, wide shelves in the dark cool cellar of the vicarage lasted.

Frau Schuster had been quite ill the day before, she said, and upon looking at her, Frau Ursula hazarded the remark that Frau Schuster was understating the truth—she looked so very ill. And Frau Ursula added another to her already innumerable attempts to persuade the faded old gentlewoman to enter a home. Frau Schuster resisted, as usual.

"I haven't the money," she said, finally.

"I have told you half a dozen times that the money will be forthcoming," said Frau Ursula, kindly.

"I have never accepted charity in all my life," replied the poor old woman, sniffing lugubriously. Her tone became moist and flabby. Tears were imminent.

"You should not regard the gift of a sum which would enable you to enter a home as charity," said Frau Ursula, soothingly. "Your life has been a useful one. You have been kind, efficient, unselfish. Always you have given more than you have received. If that were not so you would have enough now to buy yourself into a home. Society owes virtuous old age, when that old age is childless, the

security and the decency of a comfortable home. Can you not bring yourself to look at it in this light?"

"*Ach, nein,*" Frau Schuster replied, "it really cannot be, *Frau Kommerzienrat!*"

Frau Shuster, who was afflicted with the Teuton's incurable love for titles, had bestowed this fortuitous one upon Frau Ursula. She had a profound conviction that fate would have bestowed at least that much of a title upon Mr. Hauser, if he had elected to remain at home in Germany. In what country, excepting plebeian America, would this badge of commercial distinction have been churlishly withheld from so patrician a daughter of the human race? Frau Schuster regarded all things American with a pitying contempt. Her own emigration had been the result of her marriage—the marriage had been enforced by her father, the emigration by her husband, upon whom, in turn, it had been enforced by circumstances of which he was not the victim. Women were the toys of men, men the playthings of life, and America the self-inflicted Siberia of misguided or erring Germans. Such was Frau Schuster's philosophy.

Frau Ursula perceived the futility of endeavoring to change a viewpoint so ingrained, but she decided to make an effort to persuade the old woman to come and live with them. She was not given to procrastination. But she procrastinated now because she had an urgent call to pay.

Frau Schuster's chief ailment was asthma. Attendant upon that ill, and augmented by and augmenting it, was arteriosclerosis, the disease of old age. The doctor had furthermore discovered that she was rheumatic, and accordingly she was equipped with an entirely new outfit of panaceas—medicated cigarettes for the asthma and lithia tablets for the rheumatism.

Guido watched with the utmost interest the entertaining spectacle of a staid old lady of seventy-eight smoking, or trying to smoke, her first cigarette. Truth to tell she did not succeed very well, nor did she try very hard. She seemed to have a feeling that the proprieties required her to fail, lest in succeeding doubt be cast upon her erstwhile continence. She had a horror of being suspected of secret vices. It was the poor woman's last vanity.

So, instead of placing an end of the cigarette in her mouth, as an orthodox cigarette required, she fussed and blew and whistled at its lighted end, as if it could be made to yield its virtue in such wise, like a punk.

The cigarette was a failure. Guido thought he could do better himself, and offered to smoke one for her. But, after due cogitation, she decided that even a medicated cigarette might engender the habit of smoking in her charge, and Guido's ambitions came to nought.

The lithia tablets, on the other hand, were a source of satisfaction both to the patient and to the observer. Dropped into a tumbler of water, the tablets spurted joyously heavenward, as if challenging the laws of gravitation. Each tablet was a tiny witch's cauldron, upsetting Newton's Law. It exhilarated Guido merely to watch that tempestuously bubbling miniature geyser. He enjoyed the frothing hubbub so much that he hoped Frau Schuster would require a tablet every hour. But hers was not a desperate case, and the intervals prescribed were three hours. They had a little argument about it, and for once she did not yield to his entreaties. Guido, for the world of him, could not rejoice that matters—as far at least as her rheumatism was concerned—were not so very bad with her after all. He was avid to watch another tumbler of water in chemical commotion. He was almost sorry that Frau Schuster was not more ill than she was.

In all he had the pleasure of watching only four of Frau Schuster's tablets gush themselves away into nothingness that day, and it was written in the book of fate that he was to see no more. For the poor creature fell ill that very night after reaching home, and had to be removed to the hospital. A week later Frau Ursula told Guido that his old companion-nurse had decided, after all, to go to the Home. Several weeks elapsed before he learned the truth. She had died three days after reaching the hospital. They would not have told Guido of her death even then, but Frau Schuster had enjoined upon the hospital nurse not to forget to see that little Guido Hauser received a small box made of rosewood and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which she had treasured very highly. It was locked, and the key had been lost and it was necessary to call in a locksmith to open it, a circumstance which vastly stimu-

lated Guido's imagination. He expected to find in it at the least a chart revealing where hidden treasure had been sunk—or buried, in the vicarage garden at Herrgottsau.

But when they opened the box there was in it nothing but a string of jade beads, very beautifully carved, and an exquisitely embroidered cambric handkerchief, yellow with age, in which something was wrapped.

Guido allowed the jade beads to glide through his fingers with a feeling of mingled delight and regret.

"The *Schlossherr*, Baron von Arndt, brought it to her from China, when she was eight years old. He brought one for her and for *Schulmeister's* Kaetchen because once a week they spent an afternoon at the *Schloss* with his youngest daughter." And immediately his imagination carried him back to the vicarage at Herrgottsau. The picture conjured was as clean-cut as if he had lived there himself.

Frau Ursula did not allow him to drift too far away.

"See, Guido, here is something else," she said, handing him the saffron-odored handkerchief.

The child received it, and carefully unwrapped it. There appeared a bottle, a stout, squat, bull-necked bottle, of modern, American manufacture, which Guido recognized at a glance. It contained Frau Schuster's lithia tablets.

If Frau Ursula perceived anything ludicrous in this legacy, she gave no sign, and any secret sense of the ridiculous which she may have entertained was speedily eclipsed by the look of horror which came to the boy's face.

"Guido, *mein Herz*, what is the matter? Shall I take it away?"

"By no means." The boy's fingers clasped themselves feverishly about the lithia tablet bottle, suggesting unguessed strength in the feeble-appearing fingers.

Frau Ursula was a respecter of the veils and draperies which swathe the soul. She did not seek to pry into the matter which was tormenting her boy. She knew him well enough to know that the fever of excitement, by whatsoever caused, must run its course. Very quietly she rose and left him alone.

His imagination was always a Pegasus; with conscience as the jockey, there was no checking it midway in its wild careening. And wildly careen it did. He was filled with bitter self-reproach, and self-reproach was followed

by self-execration. For the sake of a momentary, sensual pleasure (he had no conception, of course, of the coarser meaning of sensual!) he had wished a fellow-creature to be more ill than she was. And he had wished it at a time when death had already stretched out for her his fleshless arms. And this although, since he was always sick himself, he knew just what discomfort illness and pain impose. And in dying, the victim of his lawless thoughts had bequeathed to him the very thing that had caused him such an unholy joy and such unholy desires. He was a beast. Nay, more. He was a devil. Probably if he had lived at an earlier period and had had the power, he would have been a second Nero. Perhaps he had been Nero. Perhaps he had burned Rome for the pleasure of seeing it in flames. Perhaps he had been Caligula. And the more he thought about it, the more probable it seemed to him that in some previous life he had been one of these monsters. He had, as we know, received virtually no religious instruction whatever, but he had read of the Egyptian belief of transmigration of souls. And his religious fantasy, reaching out, appropriated the convenient doctrine in the hour of his spiritual downfall.

For a little while he was very miserable. Then, in turning over the pages of the Dictionary, he discovered the word "tumulosity," and was forthwith plunged into such an ecstasy of joy that he forgot all about his secret guilt.

About ten days later he was told by his mother that his new companion-nurse would arrive in a few days and that she was to make her home with them.

"Is she just like Frau Schuster?" the child asked, eagerly.

From the quickness with which he shot the question at her, his mother perceived that he had taken it for granted that the delay in providing a new companion for him had been occasioned by the natural difficulties which beset the quest for an exact counterpart of Frau Schuster. How confused, after all, was even a clever child's ratiocination. Frau Ursula smiled oddly, wryly.

"She is like Frau Schuster in that she is a widow. Otherwise, she is entirely different."

"But, Mother, then will she do?"

The unconscious tribute to the dead woman implied by this adorable simplicity touched Frau Ursula to the quick.

She wished, fully conscious of the futility of such wishing, that the poor old woman might have had the comfort of knowing on what sublime heights dwelt the lad's esteem of herself.

"I think she will do very well, indeed, Guido, if you will like her and if she will like you."

"And in what way is she different, Mother?"

"In the first place, dear, she is not a German."

"Not a German? But, Mother, how then will I be able to talk to her?"

"I think," said Frau Ursula, smiling broadly, "that you are quite capable of making yourself understood in English."

"Yes, of course—only—that is—Mother!" He wound up weakly, fully aware that his feeble tongue was not able to cope in the least with the multitude of objections which accrued to an American in the capacity of companion-nurse.

He had in all his little life met only three or four *real* Americans, as he and friend Otto invariably designated Americans of Anglo-Saxon extraction to distinguish them from themselves. There was, for instance, an old Mr. Furlong, who kept a stationery store near the school. His manner and accent, although there was nothing ominous in either, awed Guido, almost frightened him. It seemed mysterious, as if coming from some higher region of the world—or the throat. The fact that he understood Mr. Furlong perfectly, knew the meaning of every word spoken by him, while on the other hand his own tongue was incapable of breathing that subtle enchantment upon the same work-a-day words, made the thing so baffling.

He would never feel at home with an American, he thought. They awed him too mightily.

Then, too, constant contact with an American would rob that semi-luminous, semi-nebulous fairyland inhabited by difficult English words of its glamour and fragrance. Dozens of words there were, which he loved in appearance and sound, while having only a hazy idea of their meaning. He was almost afraid to inquire too narrowly into their meaning. He studiously avoided scanning the definitions in the dictionary printed alongside of these gorgeous

charmers. He was content to be fascinated by them without troubling closely to scrutinize their characters.

Worst of all, perhaps, with an American in the house, his mother would be forced to speak English, a practice which he abhorred. Frau Ursula's English had no curious twists and turns, her accent was not bad, was, in fact, deemed pretty by the Americans with whom she had speech, being an intonation rather than a crude distortion. But Guido, who had the ear of a purist, and who gloried in the meticulousness of her German, thought her English insufferable. His admiration and love for her dwelt on so high a plane that he could not bear to think of her as less than perfect in any way.

Furthermore, he was the victim of an unhappy feeling which dated back to a day when his mother had pointed out to him, then a tiny boy of five, the first *real* Americans he had ever consciously beheld. They were so well dressed and so well groomed, so free from noisy gestures and exaggerated speech, that, from that day on a vivid portrait of that American family had been clearly limned in his mind, and he had come to regard his early model as a sort of composite portrait of all American families.

Henceforth Americans had appeared to him to constitute a superior race.

And right here he was forced into a cruel, a hazardous predicament. To confess this emotion to his mother, who was German-born, was to stigmatize her as having sprung from an inferior race. His love forbade the infliction of such a hurt upon her who was dearer to him than all the world beside. He took himself very seriously, and like all persons, childrens or grown-ups, who have a taste for that form of entertainment, he became intensely miserable.

Of one thing he was sure. He must keep his objections and his despondency to himself, and submit to having this wondrous creature from another realm invade his own humble sphere. Henceforth he must go cold in winter, hot in summer, uncomfortable at all seasons. For never, *never, NEVER* would he be able to ask an American to fetch him a glass of water, to put an extra blanket on his bed, to thwack his pillows, to open the window or to perform any of the hundred and one ministrations of the sick-room.

Princesses and fairies were all very well between story-book covers, but why should they wish to step out of the golden frame into the drab dank world of commonplace?

He perceived with bitterness inexpressible that it was impossible to magnify the disaster which loomed ahead.

The name of the Disaster was Mrs. Donald Thornton. The name, which satisfied both Guido's sense of romance and love of euphony, under other circumstances, would have been a mine of delight. As matters stood, it only put a keener edge upon his misery. Mrs. Donald Thornton, as one could tell by the name, would not fit in with Anasquoit society. Among the Schumachers, the Herrlichs, the Ladenhoffs and Dieseldoeffers. He imagined her as a sort of Dowager Duchess, with a long black veil, heavily edged with crepe, a haughty mien, cuffs and collars of real Brussels lace and an accent so distinguished and English that he would never be able to utter a single, silly word in her presence. It did not occur to him to think of Frau Schuster's successor as other than old.

It was high noon of a blustery April day when the Disaster arrived. Little wind flurries had stirred the dust in the street and had left it lying in tiny heaps against fences and stoops and in area-ways, as if it had been snow. But the sky was gloriously blue, the clouds virginally white and the air a thing to drink in as greedily as apple cider at Thanksgiving.

Guido, straining every nerve to hear, listened anxiously to the greetings which were being exchanged in the parlor by his mother and the Calamity. The sounds which reached him were not formidable. Nevertheless he was terribly agitated. He expected, he knew not what. His hands were cold and clammy. His brow was feverish with excitement.

Finally, after an interminable conversation, of which Guido did not understand a word because his mother and the stranger had lowered their voices, his mother ushered in Mrs. Thornton. And then poor Guido had the surprise of his life. The Disaster was not old and haughty and crisp and Duchess-like. She was young, so very young that it was hard to believe that she had ever been married and was now a widow. For Guido had the average child's

notion that all married folk—always excepting its own mother—are old and staid, or at least well on in middle age. In spite of her widowhood, which was recent, she was not dressed in mourning. She wore a dark-blue mannish suit with a shirtwaist of pink crêpe de chine and a trimmed, high-crowned sailor hat.

And she was pretty, quite preposterously pretty. Her brown hair seemed to have snared some of the glory of the April sun, and, as she entered, the room seemed filled with a sudden bright effulgence. Guido, who had in a superlative degree the passive power of being charmed, fell desperately in love with her in a moment. He was so delighted with Mrs. Thornton's winning, sweet personality that he forgot to be frightened. Instantly he enthroned her in the inner shrine of his heart, very near the holy of holies where his mother's image dwelt.

"So this is the little man I am to sit with," said Mrs. Thornton, and, as if divining that he hated to have grown-ups stand near his bed and loom down upon him like the Pyramids or the leaning Tower of Pisa, immediately seated herself in a chair quite near his bed. Very slowly she drew her soft suede gloves from her hands. The action entranced him.

"I hope we are going to be good friends, Guido," she said, in a voice as winning as her personality.

In the fantastic loneliness in which his life was lapped, he had rehearsed this meeting with Mrs. Thornton not once but a dozen times, just as he had tried to draw a mental portrait of her. Each rehearsal had suggested a new modification. None of them had tallied with the reality. Now, in view of the simple directness of her greeting, all his efforts at a forecast seemed labored and crude. But, because he had bungled in imagination, was no reason why he should bungle now. He wanted desperately to put his best foot forward, to charm as he had been charmed.

"I'm sure we are going to be good friends," he said, shyly. "We will be, if it depends upon me."

"You dear little lad!" Mrs. Thornton exclaimed, placing soft, pink fingers on his white, cold little hand. "Why, I love you already."

He looked at her pleadingly with his soft, dark eyes.

He wanted to tell her that he was her abject slave. But he was afraid she might laugh at him if he employed so energetic a mode of describing his attachment. So he said, quite simply:

"I think you are wonderful. I like you more than anyone I've ever met, excepting, of course, my mother."

"You adorable little boy!" Impulsively she flung her arms about him, and straining him to her heart, kissed him softly on brow and neck.

When she released him he perceived that her eyes were moist. She was struggling to overcome some supreme emotion. Suddenly she broke into sobs. She rose, and walked away from his bed to the farthest corner of the room, his mother following.

"I'm afraid," said Frau Ursula, "it is going to be too hard for you."

"Oh, no," Mrs. Thornton retorted. "I'm not crying because it is going to be hard, but because it is going to be so sweet. He's perfect—oh, quite perfect! If you knew how empty my arms have been—it's a God-send, dear Mrs. Hauser. It's going to help me lots. The double cross was almost more than I could bear. I'm ashamed of my weakness."

"My dear, my dear," Guido heard his mother say, tenderly.

He reflected on the queerness of women. They must both think him very obtuse if they flattered themselves that he did not know what they were speaking about. From Mrs. Thornton's disjointed ejaculations he knew as plainly as if he had been told that she had recently lost a little child as well as her husband. And he understood his mother's mode of reasoning perfectly. Because he himself was ill she did not wish to have anyone tell him of the death of a child, as if he didn't know from his story books that children died as readily as adults. And he was not afraid of death. Not in the least. He had never been present at a funeral, had never looked upon the face of a corpse, and in spite of the passionate seriousness with which his imagination worked upon any subject to which it fastened itself, there were strange gaps in his flights of fancy which corresponded to the gaps in his knowledge of the outside world—chasms which imagination could not

bridge without some suggestion of reality from which to swing its cables.

He knew nothing of the theories of heaven and hell, nothing of atheism. When he thought of death he thought of it not as an extinction but an enlargement of life. That he had no concept whatever as to the nature of the Great Beyond, added to the zest of the adventure involved in that final expedition. Death was a tremendous excursion, a tremendous augmentation of one's powers. Of that he felt certain.

He was a little irritated by the secrecy in which his mother and Mrs. Thornton were trying to hide the bald fact that Mrs. Thornton had lost a child. He was tempted to tell them that he knew. Then he reflected it would be unkind to spoil their illusion of mystery.

"I am going to leave you alone with Guido so that you may become acquainted with each other," said Frau Ursula. "I must not speak much to you in his presence," she added, mischievously.

Mrs. Thornton expressed a perfectly natural astonishment.

"You see," Frau Ursula continued, still mischievous, "Guido objects to my English."

"Mother!" Poor Guido's face was crimson. Now Mrs. Thornton would think him a very horrid little boy. "It's like this," he murmured, "Mother's German is so beautiful, and, well, her English isn't."

"I understand perfectly," said Mrs. Thornton, smiling, and patting his hand. "You see, it's just the reverse with me. My English is—well, not beautiful, exactly, but tolerable—while my German is a thing to shudder at."

Mother and son expressed their surprise at the unsuspected accomplishment of German.

"*Ich spreche ein klein Bischen, aber ich verstehe alles,*" said Mrs. Thornton, screwing her mouth into a comical caricature of itself, and speaking in a queer, strained voice that chopped the words into stiff, hard syllables spiked with corners and bristles. Almost it seemed as if she wished to ridicule the German language which, as she was a gentlewoman, was, of course, unthinkable. Also, she had, in one brief little sentence, made two bad breaks. One thing was certain. Mrs. Thornton's German

was quite as excruciating as his mother's English. Guido was rather glad to have discovered this imperfection in Mrs. Thornton. It did not cheapen her in his eyes. It merely restored his self-esteem which had lain sick and wounded for so long a time owing to his mother's disability. Probably, he reflected, each would address the other in her own tongue; and he was glad of it.

Mrs. Thornton was a revelation to Guido. He drank in greedily every peculiarity of speech and manner. Because she was an American, she had for him, who was American-born himself, the charm of the exotic. She affected him as did the alpine violets which Dr. Koenig sent to his mother every Christmas, flowers which, by no stretch of the imagination, could he fancy as growing in anything so familiar as his own garden. ✓

She used a good many expressions which, because they were new to him, delighted him inordinately. He loved to hear her say, "Really?" and "Just fancy such a thing." He thought "I presume" a great improvement on "I think," as he himself would have said, and on "I guess," which was Otto's non-committal way of expressing an opinion. He was a little puzzled by Mrs. Thornton's habit of using unexpectedly the word "right." She said "right pretty" and "right cold," instead of "very pretty" and "very cold." He had, at this period of his life, not the faintest notion that there were colloquialisms in English as well as in German. Frau Heinrichs, the washerwoman, spoke *plattdeutsch* (low German) and Frau Schuster, to amuse him had sometimes broken into the dialect of Baden, where she had lived for some years after her marriage, and he knew that there were dozens of other German dialects in addition to these two. But he did not know at this time that the English of Scotland and the English of Ireland not only differ from each other, but differ from the English of Wales, of Lancashire, of Soho and Mayfair.

It was therefore a very wise move on his mother's part that she had brought America, in the person of Mrs. Thornton, into her boy's ken as an antidote to the unescapable German and German-American atmosphere in which the lad lived, since his schoolmates, and his teachers, and his friends, and the servants inevitably provided it. ✓

He would have loved dearly to copy some of Mrs.

Thornton's more conspicuous expressions, but ordinarily he lacked the courage to do so. One day, to overawe Otto, he essayed Mrs. Thornton's style, but instead of overawing Otto, he merely excited his scorn.

"You think you're real smart, don't you?" taunted Otto. "Oh, I beg pardon, I meant to say 'right' smart. If you don't look out, you'll be a regular American," he concluded, warningly.

"But that's what I want to be," said Guido, hotly.

"Well, if you'd rather be an American than a German you're a boob," continued Otto. "Americans don't know much. My farder says so. They're not thorough the way Germans are thorough. Anyhow, you'll be nothing but a copy-cat. You say 'Right-O,' and 'What a lark,' and 'How absurd,' just the way Mrs. Thornton says it. Next thing you'll be wearing your hair fluffed up over your temples and be begging your mother for girl's dresses."

Guido was white with rage, but he was just enough to realize that, in a measure, he had deserved Otto's ridicule. So, instead of retaliating, he fenced.

"You like Mrs. Thornton yourself," he said, in his top-loftiest manner.

"Sure thing, why not?" conceded Otto. "That marble cake she baked was fine. And that pudding of hers with custard jelly and beaten cream and whipped white of eggs was just grand."

"Whipped cream and beaten white of eggs," corrected Guido, gently, feeling that he was scoring a dozen points.

"Well, it tastes just as good no matter what you call it," said Otto, wholly unabashed. "My mother said," he continued, "she wouldn't mind having the recipe for that pudding."

"Indeed!" Guido had been within an ace of saying "Really," but had caught himself in time. "Can an American teach a German anything? I thought Americans didn't know anything and Germans knew it all."

"You are very *sarkastisch* at times," said Otto, looking hot and red.

After that Otto's braggadocio was a little less offensive than before, while Guido refrained from deliberately pilfering from another person's terminology, no matter how tempting the outlay.

Mrs. Thornton's stories—for of course Guido requisitioned stories from her as from all other adults—were replete with the atmosphere of America. Her girlhood had been spent on a farm in the Middle West, and the tales she told Guido reflected the homely charm and, it must be confessed, the somewhat narrow life of the American farmer. Her tales were of sewing bees, quilting parties, prayer-meetings and revivals; of the daily round of chores, plowing and sowing and driving the cattle to pasture and home again; of butter-churning, of bread and pie-baking, of preserving and canning and rag-carpet weaving. From her stories the child gleaned his first insight into the typical life of American America, which is not found in the cities or even in the suburbs as much as in the broad expanses of fertile acres in the sparsely populated country in which all the States, even the Eastern States, abound. These stories broadened his horizon and enlarged his vocabulary. He learned the English names of many simple household utensils and implements which, incredible as it seems, he had heretofore been able to name in German only. Such simple words as newel-post, gridiron, crane, threshold and eaves were new to him, and as his vocabulary became enriched, his diction became more flexible, his locutions simpler. He himself was unaware of the change, but he was falling more and more into the English idiom in speaking English. Perversions which he had formerly used, as "leave a little over for me," and "that's for the cat," were expurgated forever from his vocabulary.

Mrs. Thornton had another accomplishment which he coveted. She was an indefatigable knitter. He begged long and hard to be taught this feminine art before she would allow him to ask his mother's consent.

Frau Ursula laughed when questioned.

"Why not?" she said. "Why should he not learn to knit if he wishes to? There was an officer in a crack German regiment whom we knew very well who was an expert knitter," she added, reminiscently.

Mrs. Thornton had been reading the Sermon on the Mount to Guido and she now took up the Bible and resumed reading where she had left off. She had not read more than a few sentences when she became aware of

Frau Ursula standing beside her, very white and a little peremptory.

"*Verzeihung*," she said, "is it the Bible you are reading to Guido?"

"Why, yes," Mrs. Thornton replied, a little surprised. "There is no objection, is there?"

"Oh, Mother," Guido cried, "please don't forbid me to read the Scriptures. I love them. And it's the loveliest Bible you ever saw. It's so old it contains the Maccabees. Just look at it, *Mutterchen*!"

Mrs. Thornton handed it to Frau Ursula, smiling, and Frau Ursula, annoyed with herself for having shown her concern, received the book and turned over the pages carelessly. After all, it was impossible never to allow the child to see a Bible. She herself had permitted him to accompany her to church a few times. What a puzzle it was that confronted her? How was No-Bias possible? How?

As she nervously continued to turn over the pages of Mrs. Thornton's well-thumbed Bible, it fell open at the fly-leaf, which was almost entirely covered with names in various handwritings, which, very evidently, were the signatures of the various Thorntons who had owned the volume. Alongside of each name was a date—the date on which possession had been acquired.

Mrs. Thornton leaned over toward Frau Ursula, and ran her fingers down the column of names. She found the name which she was seeking. Indicating it, she said:

"He was one of the Signers."

"One of the Signers?" Frau Ursula inquired politely, non-comprehension in her eyes.

But Guido, who was younger, more alert, more Americanized, divined the meaning of the word thus used.

"One of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence!" he cried, almost boisterously.

"Yes," Mrs. Thornton nodded, smiling at his enthusiasm.

"Oh, Mother, isn't it wonderful?"

He was lost in exuberant delight. At the moment Mrs. Thornton seemed to him almost sacrosanct, a personage so exalted that she should be surrounded with the circumstances of pomp. It seemed incredible to him that she should be sitting there at his bedside, playing with him and

taking care of him as if she had been just an ordinary every-day person like himself.

"My husband," Mrs. Thornton was saying, "was not a lineal descendant, and the Bible came to him in a round-about way through a distant kinsman. I myself am a Daughter of the Revolution."

Guido's sense of awe increased. It was the first time that he had come into flesh-and-blood contact with historic America, and the effect was exhilarating. Of historic Germany Frau Ursula had told him so much; of the Free Cities, of the *Hansastaedte*, of the *Zuenfte* of old Nuremberg, of the Fuggers, the Roths—those merchant princes of Augsburg who burned sandalwood instead of logs in the hearth at which they welcomed Charles V; of Martin Luther; of Weimar and all it stood for; of Wagner and the Mad King of Bavaria and his *Schwanenschloss*. These were the traditions in which his mother had been bred, and which she was able to impart to him by word of mouth. He had found them enchanting excursions into a real, not a make-believe, fairyland.

But to come into intimate contact with the historic life of America, the life whose sinews were interbound with those intellectual giants who had made America, was even more delightful. It was more than delightful. It was intoxicating. There were times when the Revolution had seemed to him unreal when juxtaposed to the historic events of Germany of which his mother had told him. That was so, of course, because the impressionable mind of a child derives an almost tangible sustenance from the gestures, the inflections of the voice, the mere physical presence of the story-teller. He had hungered often and often for personal glimpses, for a personal point of contact with his own country. And although he had been born on American soil, and had lived in his native land almost all his life, he had, until now, been virtually insulated from American life by the thick strata of German life and German thought and German speech which surrounded him on all sides.

It is no exaggeration to say that Mrs. Thornton's brief mention of her husband's antecedents did more to visualize America for Guido as an actuality than all the books he had read and all the lessons he had learned "in American

history" put together. Heretofore he had been an exile in the heart of his own country; now, abruptly, he knew that he belonged to America and America to him. He had lived through a spiritual experience of great pith and moment.

Frau Ursula returned the Bible to Mrs. Thornton. She sighed deeply. Then she said, speaking German:

"You are a fortunate woman, Mrs. Thornton. Your forbears, for generations, have lived on free soil. You accept this wonderful heritage quiescently, indifferently, as a matter of course, and consequently you have no obligations excepting those which bind you more closely to your own country. You have no conception—it is impossible that you should have—how very fortunate you are."

And, as she did not prohibit the Bible readings, Mrs. Thornton felt herself at liberty to continue them.

CHAPTER IV

FRAU URSULA paid another visit to Dr. Koenig's office the following morning.

"I am beginning to look upon you as my spiritual as well as my medical adviser," she said. "Somehow I can speak more freely to you than to Pastor Marlow. Do you mind?"

"I am immensely flattered, dear lady," said Dr. Koenig. "More than that, I am interested." He opened a drawer and drew forth a daguerreotype which he handed to her.

"Guido's grandfather at twenty-five," he said. "Some day the boy shall have it."

Frau Ursula exclaimed in astonishment.

"Why," she cried, "the boy looks like him! I always thought that his dark eyes and his dark hair were a legacy from his mother. His father, you know, was blue-eyed and had fair hair. Ah! How happy this makes me. I had feared, I had feared——" she broke off abruptly.

"As your spiritual adviser I feel at liberty to tell you what you feared," said Dr. Koenig, smiling. "You feared that Guido's dark hair and dark eyes outwardly symbolized the darkness coming to him through the mother and—mayhap, lurking somewhere in his soul."

"Ah!" she cried, "you think me very unfair."

"I think you are very much a woman," he said, gravely, leaving her to wonder whether he considered her—or generic woman—the incarnation of unfairness, or whether he had merely guessed the emotional tie that bound her so strongly to the boy.

She felt a little pained, she could hardly have said why, but she was too much of a utilitarian to nurse a minor wound when matters of greater moment required her undivided attention and his counsel.

"Yesterday," she said, coming to the point abruptly, "I found Mrs. Thornton reading to Guido from the New Testament. My difficulties are multiplying. How can I

maintain an attitude of No-Bias? Both in religion and politics. He loves the Bible, he tells me, and last night at eleven, when I thought him sound asleep, he suddenly sat bolt upright in bed and in a whisper repeated the Lord's Prayer thrice over. Then he lay down and slept."

"Prayer," mused Dr. Koenig, "is an excellent disciplinarian. In Guido's case—last night—I have no doubt that he would have required a sedative if, following an unerring instinct, he had not helped himself to a dose of spiritual asafœtida."

"You are trifling!" said Frau Ursula. She was a little shocked at what seemed to her levity in sacred matters.

"I assure you I am not. But, if that viewpoint displeases you, here is another. Guido may regard the Lord's Prayer in the light of a literary, not a religious exercise."

"Ah," she cried, "you are humorous this morning."

"*Meine liebe Frau Hauser!*" The old physician had become very grave. "You know how deeply the German language is indebted to Luther's translation of the Bible, because, happening at a critical period, it helped to form the German vernacular and to stabilize it. Similarly, the King James version of the English Bible, together with Shakespeare, stabilized and vitalized the English language. The German Bible is much more archaic in expression than the English Bible. Indeed, the English Bible is a remarkable production, one of those translations which vie in literary quality, vigor and polish with the original. It deserves the high place accorded it by cultured Americans and cultured Englishmen, irrespective of creed. Guido, with his passion for books, was bound to discover it some time or other. Let him read it and rejoice in it. English and American culture are so inseparably interbound with the Bible and with Shakespeare that I see no possibility of eliding either from his life."

"You see," Frau Ursula responded, "I am trying desperately to be fair to his mother. Personally nothing would make me happier than to see Guido turn to some church—some Protestant church, of course—of his own accord. But his mother was very insistent on this point. His education was to be non-sectarian."

Dr. Koenig smiled.

"The Bible is non-sectarian," he said. "And unless ex-

traneous influence of some sort is brought to bear upon the boy, I am certain that he is far too intelligent to accept either the New or Old Testament as being literally true."

"Ah!" exclaimed Frau Ursula. As a sound church-woman she was not wholly pleased by Dr. Koenig's glancing criticism. Dr. Koenig continued:

"He will see in the Scriptures an enchanting treasure-trove of stirring tales, and the New Testament, with its miracles of birth and transfiguration, will appeal to him as an apotheosized fairy-tale. As to Christ's ethical teachings, there are none finer the world over. On that point we are all agreed."

Frau Ursula sat with wrinkled brow.

"The trouble is," she said, "I do not have a very clear recollection of what his mother said touching ethical instruction. Ah!" she cried petulantly, "what a quagmire of irresolution I am in. There are times when I pray for strength to abandon the entire lunatic scheme of No-Bias! What good can come of it? And if good does come—SHE will not be there to see it."

Frau Ursula's method of uttering the third person singular, feminine neuter, evades description. The unfortunate pronoun was much too feeble a vehicle for the burden of contempt, disdain, disgust and—it must be confessed—anger which it was meant to convey.

"I think," the old physician responded, "that you are exaggerating the difficulties which beset you—at least in this particular. If you think it necessary to offset and neutralize what is denominational and particular in the teachings of Christ, all you need do is to place in Guido's hands copies of the sacred books of the Buddhists, of the Mohammedans, of the Jews. Note, if you please, that I said 'if.' Personally, I do not think it necessary. Christianity, in many respects, is the finest of all religions. It had been a tremendous factor in building up Western civilization, and only a fanatic could object to its teachings."

"And I thought you a free-thinker!" Frau Ursula exclaimed. "I confess, I did not expect to find in you an eulogist of Christianity."

"An apologist rather than an eulogist!" Dr. Koenig corrected Frau Ursula, with a smile. "Even a free-thinker

is not free from bias. Is it not wonderful, *verehrte Frau*, that the ethical teachings of Christ, of Buddha, of Moses, the three finest religions of the world, are identical? Moses gave us the Ten Commandments. Christ invested them with the prestige of His authority. Buddha enunciated the Eightfold Path of Virtue, giving a less compact setting to the same teachings. Even the Golden Rule appears in different garb in no less than three religions. Judaism, in spite of the awful vision of a wrathful and vindictive Jehovah—an-eye-for-an-eye and a-tooth-for-a-tooth-Jehovah, paved the way for it. The Golden Rule is contained in an indirect form in Leviticus xix. 34. Christ gave it to the world in a clarified and purified form, and Confucius taught it in a reversed form, 'Do not unto others what you would not have others do unto you.' And as most of us suffer more from active unkindness than from kindness withheld, we must perforce admit the superior practicability of the version of Confucius, although Christ's version is superior ethically in demanding an active assertion of good-will, not merely an abstention from ill-will."

Frau Ursula had given an imperfect attention to Dr. Koenig's words. While he meandered on, she was turning over in her mind the feasibility of his suggestion to provide Guido with the teachings of Judaism and Buddhism. She now reverted to this.

"As you know," she said, "I am a Lutheran, and I confess that I would rather see my boy a Mohammedan than a Roman Catholic."

"Pure woman!" Dr. Koenig laughingly commented.

Frau Ursula pouted prettily. He was so very very old that he seemed to her a sort of generic father. His age made her keenly aware of the youth that was still in her, with its partially arrested, partially diverted currents.

"It is the second time to-day that you have called me that, or something like it," she said. "Is it intended as a rebuke—or not?"

"It was meant to convey that, like all women, you cannot be fair because you are a partisan."

"Ah! Are we as bad as that? So much less than men?"

"You are less than men in being less cold. Your affec-

tions range themselves on one side or the other, and your emotional impetus makes you terrible adversaries."

She felt that if the sting of censure was not absent from this retort, that censure was at least so delicately modulated and overlaid as to remove its sting. She smiled.

"All you said just now about Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism seems to disprove what you said the other day. These religions, at least, are synthetizable."

"Not in dogma, merely in ethics, and the term, I think, when so applied, is meretricious. I chose rather to see in the identity of ethics the cumulative sociological experience of different races, and, as the outcome is practically the same, the world thus obtains a code of morals more dependable than a code divinely inspired, as the Commandments of Moses and of Christ purport to be. And that brings us back to my contention that in allowing Guido to permeate himself with Christian ethics, you are allowing him to get the best at first-hand."

"For a free-thinker!" Frau Ursula ejaculated.

"A free-thinker is not necessarily an atheist, or a pagan, or a heathen, as you seem to think," Dr. Koenig rejoined, with some heat. "A pagan has no belief worthy of being termed a religious faith or a metaphysical system. He has no knowledge, even of the existence of religion as such; a free-thinker is the very reverse; he has a thorough knowledge not of one but of many religious beliefs, and his reasons for rejecting them and the dogmas for which they stand are manifold. But it is by no means precluded that the free-thinker, while rejecting dogma and doctrine, may not retain the kernel about which these dogmas gravitate, and which appears to him a precious guide for human conduct, for reasons which I have indicated before. There are those who call me an atheist. I myself term myself Monist. I am a disciple of Haeckel, with strong Spencerian proclivities."

Frau Ursula's attention had wandered again. She had no taste for metaphysics or religious speculation. She said, vaguely:

"I wish my conscience were not so troublesome."

Dr. Koenig looked hard at her. Then he said:

"If you feel that in allowing Guido to come in close contact with the Bible you would be betraying your trust,

• why not do what I suggested to you before? If I had my way, I would have them read in school at assembly alternately from the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran, the Vedas and from Confucius. Such a procedure would make for tolerance, for breadth of view, and for an unshakable conviction in the necessity for ethical living. For what the great religious teachers taught was evolved out of the consciousness of racial tradition and experience which had preceded them, if we accept the rational explanation as I do; or from a direct and deliberate revelation of the Divine Essence of the Godhead, if we accept the ecclesiastical belief in an inspired and supernatural religion, as you do. In either case, the necessity for acting in consonance with conscience, is very plain."

"I think," said Frau Ursula, "that I will follow your advice."

"If you do," said Dr. Koenig, "I beg of you not to interfere overmuch with Guido's interpretation of what he reads. Remember that the doctrines and literature of the various religious systems are the primers and spelling exercises of the fundamental principles guiding human conduct." He paused, and then resumed:

"Give a child no religious training whatever, as you proposed to do at first, and, if his inclinations are gross, you will make of him a pagan who sees in the appetites not the means of life, but its *raison d'être*. If his proclivities are vicious, you will make of him a heathen, who sees in honesty nothing but an exigency, and who consents to conform to law and order merely because he is an opportunist, not because he recognizes the existence and the necessity of moral law. If he inclines to idealism, in the absence of a profound conviction that moral law exists and that conscience is not a mere handicap in the struggle for existence, the futility of life is bound either to enrage or to crush him and to make of him either a misanthrope or a cynic. For cynicism is the unlovely fruit of idealism that has curdled, misanthropy the result of idealism condemned to sterility. In any event, he will be profoundly miserable and profoundly helpless."

"I cannot imagine Guido either as a sensualist or as an oppressor," said Frau Ursula, dryly.

"No! Although one can never tell. Boyhood is an inchoate, semi-fluid state—I conceive Guido to be an out-and-out idealist. Fear of seeing him unhappy should be as strong an incentive as the fear of seeing him vicious."

"Yes, of course! I will take your advice. Will you help me select the books which he is to read?"

"I will loan them to you," said Dr. Koenig. "It will be a wonderfully interesting experience to watch Guido—to watch the evolution in him of the ethical idea. Is he one of those humble souls who are so bewildered and oppressed by the fathomless magnitude of the spiritual and physical universe that they cling all their lives to the religious primer, or——"

Frau Usurla interrupted him.

"I," she remarked, slyly, but without resentment, "am one of those humble souls. I would I were free to make him a staunch Lutheran."

"Pure woman again," Dr. Koenig declared. "It is barely possible that he is not of the stuff of which Lutherans are made."

"At any rate," said Frau Ursula, "I am going to follow your advice, for the simple reason that I can see no other way out of my dilemma."

Thus was the Boy with a Political Destiny indentured to a Religious Synthesis as well. The one was the inevitable outcome of the other, as we have seen. The saving grace in allowing the lad to essay these fearsome theological and political paths was that he himself was unconscious of the venture. It was to him, therefore, not a venture but an adventure, and an adventure, to deserve its name, is always worth its while.

CHAPTER V

EARLY in March Guido began to improve rapidly. The waters of life ran smoothly and pleasantly for him these days. Always he had with him either his idolized mother or Mrs. Thornton, now firmly entrenched in his affections. Hauser, for the time being, was virtually eliminated from Guido's life.

For Hauser had decided that the time was ripe once more to enlarge the Anasquoit Department Store. Having attracted the bulk of the middle-class trade of Anasquoit, it was now his ambition to attract as well what in Anasquoit parlance was tersely designated as "the Bismarck Street people."

Bismarck Street was the Fifth Avenue of Anasquoit. The Hausers might long since have enjoyed the comfort of an entire house on one of the other streets, some of which were quite as shady and quiet as Bismarck Street, but Hauser resolutely opposed any such change. The tiniest apartment—and the Hauser apartment was anything but tiny—on Bismarck Street, where all the wealthy and near-wealthy German-Americans lived, was preferable to the finest mansion on one of the other streets where Germans were thrown in contact with a mixed population—Irish, Norwegian, Italian and *American!* Frau Ursula had long since ceased to argue the point. She ground her teeth more than once in impotent rage at Hauser's impossible narrowness and snobbishness and his Philistine contempt for unmon-eyed people.

Hauser had many enthusiasms, for he was by no means lacking in education and taste, but his great enthusiasm was his business, and he threw himself heart and soul into his new enterprise. The two small stores, connecting with each other on the ground floor only, which were literally packed with goods of every description, had been a veritable goldmine. They were to be discarded in May.

There had been considerable conjecture in Anasquoit as

to the nature of a handsome eight-story building on Main Street, the main business thoroughfare of the town, which ran parallel with Bismarck Street. This large building was growing up rapidly, and its origin, ownership and purpose were wrapped in mystery. An apartment house of such dimensions was unheard of in Anasquoit. A store of such mammoth size seemed equally incredible. But, as the leviathan assumed shape and form, it became apparent that the building was indeed intended for a store. Wild rumors began to circulate through the town. One of the large department store owners of New York—Stern or Wanamaker belike—was going to invade Anasquoit, and the store was building for them. So said rumor, and rumor stiffened into excitement when huge poster-like advertisements began to appear simultaneously in the local papers and street cars and on sign-boards, which offered a thousand dollars in cash to the first person sending in the name of the owner of the large store.

No correct answer was received. A later advertisement announced the identity of the owner of the Leviathan. Hauser's vanity was cruelly punctured, by this miscarriage of public opinion. He was horribly chagrined. Frau Ursula, who had been as much in the dark as the general public, was both hurt and frightened.

"Women cannot keep a secret unless it is disreputably their own," he said sharply, answering the query in her eyes. She put his sharp insolence down to his mortification and forgave him. But she could not resist the temptation of saying that he had never yet failed to consult her when embarking on a new enterprise. This was the first time he had not done so.

"In the early days I needed your financial support," he replied. "I could then not afford the luxury of surprising you." The answer was anomalous. The kindness of the second sentence was calculated, deliberately she thought, to wipe away the unkindness of the first. An angry retort surged to her lips, calling for utterance. The Bismarck Street clique were snobs, like himself, and being snobs would never deign to purchase their garments in Anasquoit. Middle-priced garments, appealing to men and women who appreciated honest value, had made his small stores a success. High-priced garments, ranging in price from fifty to

five hundred dollars, would ruin him. This she wanted to say to him, but she restrained herself from voicing the prophecy. After all, she told herself bitterly, Hauser's affairs were none of hers. Guido was her one affair, her one concern and interest. And Guido was convalescent and Hauser was too busy to take any notice of the child or to harass him.

Guido sat up thrice a day now. Sitting up necessitated mild exercise in the form of walking, a few steps at a time. Guido was wild with delight the day he was told that he might take the long journey into the parlor. Of the dining room he had had glimpses while in bed, but he had all but forgotten how the parlor looked, and to be able at last to make his way into its refinements on a tour conducted in person was for more thrilling than a vicarious expedition into darkest Africa by route of a book.

That trip into the parlor was not merely an adventure, it was a ceremony. He was swathed in a loose wrapper, so ample that he could wind it twice about his torso and limbs. This wrapper was known familiarly as the "*Polter*," a word which had no individual significance, and whose origin as a proper noun in this connection was obscure. It was made of a soft, fine woolen material, very gay, almost garish in coloring. The most fantastic of Persian designs, veritable Hasheesh dreams, was indicated by its purple scrolls and orange panels and crimson ringlets, and it was lined with brocaded silk of a delicate lavender. Guido loved the "*Polter*." Whenever it reappeared from the cedar chest, his health was engaged in ascending toward the normal point. So he had come to look upon it as a token of rejuvenation, of a renewed lease upon life and health.

Then, too, raiment so Orientally luxuriant in color and in design was a prodigious aid to the imagination. When he wore it with the woolen side turned out, he could play at being anything from Mustapha, the Sultan's favorite son, to Sinbad the Sailor. When he wore the lavender silk lining turned out, he could imagine himself to be Don Carlos, the unhappy son of Philip the Second, of whom Guido had read in Schiller's tragedy, or a turbaned Indian prince, wearing about his neck a rope of a thousand pearls, each worth a king's ransom.

One afternoon, at his request, his mother and Mrs.

Thornton piloted him to the book-case, that vast, unexplored territory for which he was yearning and repining. His mother pulled down for him some volumes which he was anxious to inspect, Lessing and Herder. Goethe and Heine were passed over. They were ground which must not be trespassed upon for the present. A large volume of Shakespeare was extricated and laid on a table. The pictures might afford him amusement, his mother said. Then Mrs. Thornton said something to his mother in an undertone regarding the text.

Guido, suspecting the nature of Mrs. Thornton's remark, demanded to be told whether Shakespeare also was forbidden fruit.

"Why no, you may read Shakespeare, if you wish," Frau Ursula replied. She knew, none better, that English had not yet become second nature to him. He might delve into the unexpurgated Shakespearian text with impunity. He would comprehend its salacities as little as its beauties.

Having settled Guido comfortably on the couch, with pillows at his back and a cover over his feet, Mrs. Thornton and his mother left him. Both had errands to attend to.

Guido, full of the joy of a long-coveted book open before him, began turning over the pages of the huge Shakespeare. It did not take him very long to discover that while he understood some of the individual words, it was utterly impossible for him to comprehend their group-meanings.

He sat very still and for at least ten minutes turned this over in his mind. He wondered whether his intelligence or his vocabulary was at fault. He could not conceive himself to be an imbecile since he had read and understood some of the great German classics. If merely his imperfect knowledge of English was at fault, there was some hope. Or, perhaps the English classics were less readily assimilable than the German.

A sudden inspiration came to him. He would question Otto concerning literary tastes of Bob Hastings, the only "real" American boy of whom he had knowledge. If Bob Hastings read Shakespeare or some other English classic as he read Schiller, then, undoubtedly, it was merely his meager English vocabulary that disqualified him.

The poor child took it for granted that all little boys of eleven read the classics of their native tongue. Otto was

an exception. But then, as Guido clearly perceived in spite of his affection for his friend, Otto was a young savage. Guido, with the curious faith of childhood in the Unseen and the Unknown, was certain that "American" boys were different. He had no very lucid notion as to the precise nature of this difference, but he felt certain that it embraced an intimate knowledge of and love for the English classics.

He was so unhappy at his lack of mastery of English, that instead of reading, or dreaming, he began to knit. Otto had never seen Guido knit. Some instinct warned him that his proficiency in this domestic art would not raise the temperature of Otto's esteem for himself. Therefore, discreetly, his knitting had always been tucked out of sight before half past three.

To-day Guido forgot, simply forgot, to obliterate the evidences of his contemptible activity. Otto, roaring like a young bull, entered the room, and perceiving his friend's occupation, fell into a deadly and for him unearthly, silence.

"By Jinks," he exclaimed, when the power of speech and of noise had returned to him, "you look like the Sultan of Sulu and you're knitting, like an old woman! You're a sissy. That's what. Knitting. *Pfui!* You make me sick!"

Ordinarily Guido's impulse would have been to make the obvious retort—that Otto made him quite as sick as he made Otto—but, as he desired to obtain certain information from Otto, he chose diplomacy rather than vigor as the instrument of chastisement.

"What's good enough for an officer in a crack German regiment is good enough for me," he rejoined.

"Ah—g'wan, what d'you take me for? D'you think I'll believe *that?*" Otto demanded. But he spoke without conviction. A crack German regiment was not to be mentioned lightly, even by such a renegade as Guido. Besides Guido's tranquillity was disconcerting. It argued that he was speaking the truth.

"It is true, nevertheless," said Guido, purling the last stitch on the needle with great deliberation.

"I don't believe it," Otto repeated, his unbelief no greater than before.

"My mother told me so," said Guido with a gentleness that, in view of the upheaval which Otto's most sanctified beliefs were undergoing, was little short of cruel.

"I don't believe it," said Otto, with utmost feebleness.

Guido raised his eye-brows, a habit he had of expressing disdain or disapproval. It was a gesture which never failed to infuriate Otto. To-day it acted upon him like a barb.

"I tell you what," he said, "you'll be wearing a muff next."

"One carries a muff, one doesn't wear it," Guido commented, dispassionately. "And if I did, I should only be following the most illustrious example in the world." His tongue stumbled a little against the string of soft syllables in "illustrious," but he managed to flounder through them without coming perceptibly to grief.

"Whom d'you mean?" Otto growled.

"I mean the Kaiser."

"Huh? What d'you take me for? A poor simp?"

Guido's eye-brows again shifted upward.

"Since when d'you consider the Kaiser such a big gun?" sneered Otto. "I thought you had no use for kings and queens."

It was a clever feint, and for a moment Guido was staggered.

"I called him that to please you," he said, finally, deftly covering his political inconsistency. "Besides, I don't mind the Kaiser. I rather like him."

"Oh, you do, do you? Well, I bet you a ride in the carrousel at the next school picnic that the Kaiser doesn't wear—carry—a muff."

Guido smiled superiorly.

"If you please, Otto," he said, politely, "hand me that post-card album from the what-not, will you?"

Otto knew from Guido's maddening smile that refutation of his denial lurked between the covers of Guido's album. How he hated Guido at the moment! How he hated the album! How he hated the Kaiser! How he hated muffs and the skins they were made of! How he would have liked to pummel that superior serenity out of Guido, sore spine or no sore spine. Otto reflected, for the hundredth time, that a sore spine was a horrible unsportsmanlike thing to possess. It was almost as bad as a secreted weapon, or a blow below the solar plexus. Fuming inwardly, he handed Guido the album.

Guido, still supremely aloof and detached, opened the book and indicating a certain card, handed the album back

to Otto, who, without as much as glancing at the card, without as much as troubling to close the album, flung it wildly at Guido's head. Guido's head, at least, thank heaven for it, had nothing the matter with it. Guido ducked. The album shot over his head into the book-case, shattering to atoms the glass door.

"There!" said Guido in a tone of superb satisfaction and laughed. Otto, sad to relate, used an unprintable word, and then, caught in the backwater of his unreasonable temper, his fury spent, giggled.

The unprintable word, Guido's laugh and Otto's giggle tripped so closely upon each other's heels as to be almost indistinguishable. The trio was still in process of disintegration when the door opened and Dr. Koenig stood before the gaping boys. He took in the situation at a glance.

"And what have you been quarreling about, my fine lads?" he inquired.

"About the Kaiser's muff, *Herr Doktor*," Guido said, regaining his composure.

"The Kaiser's muff!" the old physician burst into a roar of laughter. "Well, upon my word—often, often have I heard people quarrel about the Kaiser's beard, but about his muff—never!"

Dr. Koenig alluded not to the Kaiser's mustache, the hirsute adornment destined within a decade to be the mark of so much ridicule and vituperation, but to the German idiom which counts a quarrel about the Kaiser's beard to be a quarrel about less than nothing.

The boys sat in silence, with tingling ears, while the Doctor's laughter gradually subsided. A grave, almost a solemn mood succeeded his merriment.

"My lads," he said, "take an old man's advice. Quarrel with kings and emperors all you wish; but never, never quarrel *about* them or for them. They are mischief-makers. Avoid them and everything pertaining to them and to their brood as fervently as you avoid the devil."

"But," Otto spoke up resolutely, "my farder says this Kaiser is as fine a man as ever sat on a throne."

"High praise, indeed!" snorted Dr. Koenig. "Guido, how do you feel about this?"

"This—this Kaiser? Or kings and queens in general?" quoth Guido, calmly analytical. "I have no use for kings

and queens—*ich mag sie nicht leiden*—but this Kaiser, he seems very kind and just and honest, and truly, *Herr Doktor*, I think I like him so well, sir, that I wish he'd been a commoner in a country like ours, where he might have proven his mettle instead of having folks take him on faith."

Dr. Koenig stared at Guido in astonishment. Mentally he ejaculated, "Eleven years! Synthetic heritage or synthetic development or both? Where would this lead to? A mere hodge-podge? Rank mugwumpism? Or was the boy a synthetizer in embryo? His democracy seemed safe enough—"wish he had been born in a country like ours"—nothing equivocal or uncertain in that, surely. And as there was nothing to teach the lad in that particular, the excellent man set himself the task of disrobing William—whose sobriquet of "The Damned" had not yet been earned—of the glory in which this one small boy had enmeshed him.

"The Kaiser, when he came to the throne, was known throughout Europe and the United States as the war-lord," he began.

"Yes," Otto eagerly interrupted him, "but no one calls him that now. My farder says he's made good. My farder says he's a prince of peace—*ein Friedensfuerst*—. My farder says he is finishing the great work that Bismarck began. My farder——"

"Never mind your father," the old physician cried, testily. Otto's mouth opened wide in amazement. "Think for yourself, boy!"

He turned to Guido.

"Let me tell you a little about this great man whom you would generously make a native-born American so that he might prove his sterling worth. Among the educated classes of the Fatherland he is not held in high esteem. The glamour and the glitter of his title may impose upon German-Americans, but in Germany they do not take him very seriously. Some scorn him as an amateur statesman; some despise him as an amateur painter; some dislike him because his verses are so bad—though truth to tell, they are infinitely better than those of his ancestor, Frederick the Great!"

Here the incorrigible Otto made a sound preparatory to sidling into the conversation again with a new variation of his everlasting "my farder" theme.

"Keep still, Otto," said Guido, sharply. "I don't see, *Herr Doktor*, why a man should be held cheap because he can do many things even if he is a Kaiser."

"He does them so badly!" cried Dr. Koenig. "Let a man stick to one thing and do it well."

"It seems, though, as if he had done the one thing which is his business very well, indeed, doesn't it, sir?" the boy inquired.

"And what particular thing is his business, can you tell me?" Dr. Koenig inquired, curiously.

"To rule, of course," Guido replied.

"You are mistaken," Dr. Koenig replied. "His particular business is the Army and Navy, but to that he has attended very well indeed—much, much too well, I am afraid."

"My farder says," Otto launched forth again, only to be silenced by a joint exclamation from the Doctor and from Guido. From the fray of voices Otto's hurtling forth of "*Friedensfuerst*" rose triumphant and clear.

Dr. Koenig eyed Otto angrily. Herr Baumgarten, Otto's father, and the old physician had quarreled violently some years before in the card room of the *Deutscher Verein*. The quarrel was a political one, and being political, was bitter, and the two gentlemen had become so incensed that if others had not intervened the affair might have eventualized in blows. The affair was one of the historical episodes of the town. Everybody knew of the ancient enmity between Herr Baumgarten and Dr. Koenig. Otto had heard of it, of course. So had Guido. Hence Otto's truculence and Dr. Koenig's resentment of Otto's juvenile impudence in pushing his father into the debate so persistently.

"It is true," said Dr. Koenig, "that the world at present unites in acclaiming him as a 'peace lord.' But what does that signify? It signifies a sinister power to be the opposite—to be a war-lord—and—Guido, do you remember the story of Little Red Riding Hood?"

"Of course," Guido replied, shortly, disgusted at the sudden decline of the conversation into childish channels.

"And do you remember how the Wolf finally contrived to catch and eat Little Red Riding Hood?"

"By disguising himself as her grandmother," Guido replied, vaguely aware that the topic was not as juvenile as he had supposed.

"Exactly; and Grandmother *Friedensfuerst* will go on flattering and cozening the world until she holds the Red Riding Hood gullibles well within reach of her hand! Bah! Enough of this." Dr. Koenig rose abruptly, unwilling to be dragged into a new argument with a scion of the house of Baumgarten.

"Guido, your mother is worrying about your blood pressure. I cannot take it now. It is bound to be above normal," said Dr. Koenig. His own certainly was, for his irritation produced by Otto's raw insistence was savage. "I'll look in to-morrow morning. Good-afternoon, boys, and thank heaven fasting on your knees that you're American-born."

Guido, it will be remembered, had curbed his temper in the argument with Otto about the Kaiser's muff from no high ethical motive but because he desired to obtain certain information from his friend. Thus does diplomacy wait on morality.

"Say, Otto," he said, abruptly, after the Doctor was gone, "you never say anything about Bob Hastings any more."

Otto giggled. Otto's giggle was as easily produced as any little girl's. So were his tears. A strange compound was Otto—of kindness and surliness, of coarseness and fineness, of roughness and delicacy. Both of the boys had entirely forgotten their quarrel. Now that they had had their little daily fracas they were excellent friends again. They were like a couple of puppies, who, on meeting, yap and snarl and bite at each other merely from exuberance of youthful animal spirits.

Otto concluded his giggle, and announced:

"There ain't nothing to tell. Bob Hastings left school three weeks ago. His farder was sent out West to Missouri."

A strange sense of anger welled up in Guido's heart. Had he quelled his temper only to be thus disappointed? He felt quite indignant with Otto, who, after all, was as innocent as himself in regard to Bob Hastings' removal.

"He was a queer kid," Otto volunteered after a moment. "There is some excuse for you, readin' and readin' and readin', 'cause you gotta sore spine and can't be a real boy on that account." Here Guido choked back a quick flurry of temper. "But him," Otto continued, oblivious of the

tempest he had aroused, "him's a husky. Why, he can beat all of us, even me, at wrestling and skatin' and things. And him forever readin' like you. Teacher took away a book he was readin' under the desk one day."

"What was the book?" Guido inquired, eagerly.

"A vollum of Dickens. Teacher wouldn't give it back to Bob. Bob carried on something awful. Next day Bob's farder came in and explained to teacher how the vollum was one of a set. An' got it back."

"That was pretty fine of Bob to tell his father," Guido remarked.

"Well, I guess Bob figgered it out this way. Sooner or later his farder was bound to find out the vollum was gone, and then he'd get a licking. So I guess Bob thought he'd rather take the licking right off and get it off his chest."

"Did his father lick him?" Guido inquired, in an awe-struck voice. Lickings were one of the experiences of life which he had missed.

"Nope. At least he said not. Said his farder never licked him. Said his farder wasn't a brute. We kids didn't believe him."

"Was he caught again reading under the desk?"

"Sure. Most every week. Sometimes twiced a week. The boy what sat next to him said he read that way all the time."

"What did he read?"

"Oh, crazy stuff—stuff you'd read if you were an American. Walter Scott, and Cooper and Tales from Shakespeare."

Guido drew a deep breath, a breath so deep that it whistled. He was bitten with black despair, because this American boy who read Dickens and Scott and Lamb's Tales had passed beyond his ken. There burned in him a deep resentment against fate for treating him so scurvily. Was it always to be like this? Was he, like Tantalus, to be condemned always to be within hailing distance of Americans, that interesting and superior species, and never to come into contact with them? Then he remembered Mrs. Thornton and her Bible and his resentment fell away.

And although he never knew it, and never crossed our

- . hero's path again, the little American boy who had read Dickens under his desk because one of the traditions and standards of Guido's amazing childhood. He was one of the missed opportunities of Guido's life. And as such he was never forgotten.

CHAPTER VI

ONE day, perhaps a fortnight later, Frau Ursula called again at Dr. Koenig's office.

"Well," she said, entering with her usual brisk air, "it has happened."

"What has happened? My dear lady, you alarm me, your look is so fateful."

"Guido has asked to go to Sunday school as soon as he is up and about."

"Oh—is that all!" Dr. Koenig heaved a sigh of relief. "Well, if his spiritual blood requires the iron of religion, it is well that he should have it. Or is it the gold of religion? Gold, let us say, for with no other mineral are so many alloys used as with gold; also, no other mineral is counterfeited so often. With what particular alloy does he chose to take the mineral?"

"With the Lutheran alloy," said Frau Ursula, speaking with great satisfaction. "You see, after all, he may be of the stuff of which Lutherans are made."

Dr. Koenig laughed:

"Not so fast, not so fast," he said. "Because we are down with measles at eleven, it does not follow that we will escape the scarlet fever at eighteen."

Frau Ursula smiled wryly. The suggestion of a possible change displeased her. Suddenly she perceived Dr. Koenig's allusion, which, in her preoccupation, had at first escaped her. She smiled amusedly, for a long time, without, however, laughing aloud. She seemed to taste the flavor of that allusion lingeringly, as if it were a material thing. She accused Dr. Koenig of secretly sharing her aversion for the Catholic church. He disavowed this, feigned astonishment and pretended there had been no ulterior or hidden meaning in his allusion. They bantered each other for a little while. Then he inquired to which church Guido would wish to go for his Sunday school.

"To Pastor Marlow's church—Otto goes there, too."

"It's a German church," said Dr. Koenig, frowning. And then, vehemently: "It's a mistake. German school, German newspaper, German church."

"You read a German newspaper yourself," said Frau Ursula.

"So I do. But I read an English newspaper as well. Anyhow, it's a mistake—this herding together on American soil of persons of one nationality. The Germans do it, the Italians do it, the Irish do it, the Norwegians do it. Everybody does it. How are we to be a truly unified nation if all these separate alien complexes exist in our midst?"

"If these complexes, as you call them, are not political complexes, where is the harm?"

"The harm is potential," Dr. Koenig replied, with the quick emphasis of a man who is full of his subject. "In normal times they work no mischief. But allow a matter of vital moment to arise—say, a war with Germany, and you'll see quickly enough where the harm is."

"But why should we go to war with Germany?" Frau Ursula inquired, smiling incredulously.

Dr. Koenig gently wagged his head from one side to the other a few times, a habit he had when interrupted in a subject which to him was of paramount interest.

"I am, of course, taking a purely hypothetical case," he said, rebukingly. "In such a case the German complex, because of its strong adhesive qualities, would probably stand as one. So, probably, would the Norwegian, the Irish, the Italian complexes, because the individual members are imperfectly Americanized."

"I think you are taking a severe view," said Frau Ursula. "The first generation on this soil, the generation that emigrated, cannot become entirely assimilated, if by assimilation you mean a complete discarding of inherited national traits and of the mother tongue. But you and I, Dr. Koenig, are excellent Americans at heart, although the first sentence we utter in English betrays our nationality."

"That," the old man growled, "is precisely why I say that this flocking together of aliens is a mistake. If you and I had lived among native-born Americans ever since

coming to this country, our English would be not perfect, perhaps, but more fluent and ready."

"Then why didn't you do it?" Frau Ursula demanded, with a smile which was almost flippant.

"Because, like yourself, and like other weak and foolish people, I followed the line of least resistance," the old man roared, scowling.

His visitor laughed.

"Weak and foolish!" she said. "I wonder, *Herr Doktor*, if we really deserve that! You know, this business of leaving one's own country and breaking with one's customs, race, language, everything familiar, is a tremendous upheaval, a fearful uprooting. It's the difference in language that comes hardest, and you know it. Not all men and women are born linguists. I think, on the whole, you and I and many others like us have become Americanized in all the vital matters."

"What do you call vital matters?" the old physician asked, curiously.

"You mean, do you not? what does a woman call 'vital matters?' " Frau Ursula demanded, roguishly.

"My dear lady," he expostulated, flushing.

"I will tell you," she said, coolly, ignoring his exclamation. "I think what men value most are the obvious things, universal and equal manhood suffrage, our legislative system, an independent judiciary, freedom of speech and of the press, separation of church and state."

"I did not know," Dr. Koenig said, admiringly, "that you had so clear a comprehension of what America stands for, or, having it, valued it so highly."

"I don't know that I do value it so highly," said Frau Ursula, with a grave smile. "I was reciting a man's point of view. Now for the woman's."

"Ah!" Dr. Koenig exclaimed, impetuously, "you are a very wonderful woman, and your husband is a fortunate man."

"I wish you would tell him so," said Frau Ursula. She regretted her words immediately, and flushed furiously.

Dr. Koenig glanced at her sharply, wondering whether she had spoken in jest or in earnest. If not in jest, then what construction was he to put upon her words? He was perplexed, and he waited a moment to give her a chance

to retract with some slight phrase, as "I was joking, of course!" but she said nothing, and looked so uncomfortable and ill at ease that, to help her along, he finally said:

"You were going to favor me with the woman's valuation of America."

"So I was," she said, and recovered her composure surprisingly. "The little things of life, the delicate shades, the fine nuances, mean more to a woman than to a man. That is why one great writer has said that all women are aristocrats. By that token Europe and not America would be the ideal homing-place for women. But I conceive aristocracy to mean not snobbishness and exclusiveness so much as high standards and the ability to live up to them; and judged by that, the women of America have the immeasurable advantage over the women of Europe."

"What sort of standards are you speaking of," Dr. Koenig inquired, "material, mental, moral?"

"All three. They merge. It is ridiculous to speak of one standard as existing independently of the other two."

"Usually," said Dr. Koenig, tossing forward and backward in his swivel-chair, "usually high material standards are supposed to be subversive of high spiritual standards, the latter embracing the moral and mental elements."

"I was not speaking of love of luxury in eating and in dress," she replied. "I was speaking of decency in living, in good, palatable food, in pretty clothes, and of the astonishing love of personal cleanliness amounting almost to a mania which exists among Americans and in American homes. That love of cleanliness, you know, has become second nature in America. It has become instinctive, or, perhaps, was instinctive to begin with, and it extends to and merges with the American single standard of personal morality."

"That is true, that is very true," Dr. Koenig exclaimed, in a tone of hearty appreciation.

"And then—freedom! And courtesy! A week before we left Berlin I went out one morning to do my marketing. It was a rainy morning, and I was very plainly dressed. As I returned from market, my basket upon my arm, I was elbowed off the sidewalk by a young officer who was in a hurry to pass me. Without exaggeration, he forced me to step into the gutter in which at least an inch of water

was standing. You know as well as I do what would have occurred if my husband had happened to be with me and had dared to resent the young officer's insolence."

Dr. Koenig nodded.

"Zabern," he said, laconically. "No, decidedly, I shall never return to Germany, not even for a visit. Never."

Frau Ursula's interview with Dr. Koenig had produced in her a strange medley of emotions and sentiments. She was intensely grateful to him for his sincere interest in Guido. She thought it providential that the old physician had known the lad's grandfather. It was her conviction that a boy, to develop properly, needed a man's hand. She had a horror that Guido, with a woman-built character, might become an undesirable. A boy's mentality needs to be man-tailored, and Dr. Koenig, both for the sake of his former fellow-revolutionist and from interest in the Synthetic Experiment could now be relied upon to keep an eye on Guido, humanly as well as medically, and, if necessary, to take a hand in curbing, moderating or stimulating the lad in a thousand and one ways.

The relief afforded her by this division of responsibility was enormous. She was essentially a feminine woman and tended to turn for support and guidance to the allegedly superior acumen and strength of man. She had often suspected that the strength of mind she had developed in dealing with the tremendous problems involved in the upbringing of Guido in every imaginable way was a purely factitious strength. She mistrusted it. She even despised it. She told herself often and often, after taking some momentous step touching Guido, that she was merely acting a part. Nor was the element of fear absent in this curious assemblage of feelings. She wondered how long she would be able to keep up the sublime farce.

It was part of the sublime farce that Dr. Koenig's helpfulness merely whetted her appetite for the protective society of the male. Dr. Koenig's rambling old house stood at the junction of Tamarack and Bismarck Street, a neighborhood which a quarter of a century ago had been the last word of fashion, but which was fast losing its character of Quality Square. As Frau Ursula walked rapidly up Bismarck Street, she reflected upon her marriage. Why had Hauser failed her so lamentably? She

asked the question bitterly, without applying the painstaking, honest analysis which might have afforded her an illuminating reply. She would have been infinitely better off if she had never married him. Fate, hitherto, had saved her the final pang. What, if she were one day to meet a man who would love her, and whom she would love in return?

The first time that this phase of her problem had occurred to her, she had warded it off angrily. Did she not belong to Guido's father spiritually? A spiritual widowhood, however, is an anomalous condition and twelve years is a long time to maintain so spurious and ghostly a sentiment. As the memory of the second Guido became blurred, her healthy youth reasserted itself and cried imperiously for love and for the sweet intimacy and companionship procurable in no other way.

There were other things as well for which it cried out clamorously, and it was written in the Book of Fate that at least one other of these clandestine yearnings was to be aggravated and mortified that morning.

Playing in the narrow strip of garden which separated Pastor Marlow's church from the parsonage, Frau Ursula, in passing, espied little Elschen Marlow, the Pastor's only child—and the little girl espied her.

Elschen's mother had died in giving birth to her little daughter, and her father's housekeeper, an old Silesian peasant woman, who in the ten years of her American career had learned not a word of English and was proud of it, dressed Elschen in a style which was deemed to be particularly German throughout Anasquoit. The plain little frocks in which the child was arrayed were invariably made of stout German linen and were low-necked and short-sleeved both in winter and summer. From the scalloped edge in red or blue peeped Elschen's plump little arms which, all through the cold season, were woefully chapped. The style in which these plain little smocks were made never varied. Her coats, jackets and stockings were all domestic products, and her queer little hats showed the clumsy makeshifts of the amateur and unimaginative milliner. But the charm of the golden-haired, blue-eyed child was so great that her ungainly garments, instead of giving her the appearance of being out-of-date, made her

seem the survival of an earlier, less sophisticated generation. The little one's manner, in which a painstaking precision was coupled with an artless desire to please, furthered this impression. The child had a quaint charm which was all her own. In her way she was exquisite and unmatched.

She ran quickly to the fence to greet Frau Ursula, addressing her in German. Elschen's style in speech was as distinctive as her style in address and her manner. She used quaint, slightly stilted, old-fashioned expressions which, falling from the lips of a child lost their aridness and seemed instead ingratiating and dear.

"Are you having a holiday to-day, Elschen?" Frau Ursula inquired.

"*Ach*," the adorable child replied. "You are no doubt surprised that I am not in school. But I have been quite ill and Dr. Koenig says that I must romp and play outdoors another week. Otherwise, assuredly, my papa and Frau Vogler would not allow me to play truant."

"I am sorry you have been ill, Elschen," said Frau Ursula, "but your cheeks are as pink as ever."

"My cheeks are always pink," the child retorted, seriously. "I hope," she added, "they will not be quite so pink when I am a young lady. Do you think they will?"

"There is no telling, of course," Frau Ursula replied, suppressing a smile. "But why do you dislike pink cheeks in young ladies?"

"I dislike them only because so often the color is not natural," the child replied with the utmost gravity. "Frau Vogler says we may dye our dresses and paint our houses and stain our floors, but we must never dye our hair, or paint our cheeks, or stain our eye-lashes."

"That is excellent advice, I am sure," said Frau Ursula. Her smile refused to be suppressed any longer. But Elschen was in no way disconcerted by her visitor's amusement.

"Some day," she said, "when I have recovered entirely and can carry no contagion, I am coming to see your little boy. I am so sorry for him because he is always ill. While I was ill myself, it came to me as never before that his fate is a very pathetic one."

Elschen's unconscious assumption of the manner of a grown-up, and her simple child's phrasing commingled with

an adult vocabulary broadened Frau Ursula's smile. She bit her inner lip to restrain her amusement.

"I am afraid, Elschen," she said, "that it will sadden you to see Guido."

"*Ach ja, verehrte Frau*, it will make me very sad to see him ill and suffering. But it would make me much more sad to neglect going to see him."

"He is pretty well just now," said Frau Ursula, "so you must make haste, or he will have recovered entirely and be back at school before you know it."

Little Elschen Marlow turned around abruptly and critically regarded the strip of garden, sodden with moisture from the last thaw, and looking raw and rasped and unpromising.

"I hope Guido will not have recovered entirely before our garden has had a chance to bloom," she said. "I have set my heart on bringing him a bouquet. We are going to have an old-fashioned garden this year—hyacinths and tulips, gardenias, hollyhock, zenias and sweet williams."

"But you wouldn't wish Guido to be ill until the hollyhocks bloom—it's an autumn flower, you know," said Frau Ursula.

"I would not have him ill at all," said Elschen, entirely unembarrassed. "I am afraid I did say something of the sort. Didn't I? I meant, of course, that I hoped to give him a little pleasure while he is still ill. If you think he is going to get well quickly, I will make him some paper roses, if my father permits me to. My father was very much opposed at first to my visiting Guido at all, because Guido is a little boy and I am a little girl, but he finally consented when I explained to him that Guido is entirely different from other boys."

Parenthetically Frau Ursula wondered how that appraisal would strike her boy.

She said:

"It was very kind of your father to give his consent."

"My father is kindness itself," the little girl retorted, proudly.

"And in what way do you think Guido different from other boys?" Frau Ursula pursued.

Elschen wrinkled her childish brow.

"I have only seen him once," she said, "but the impres-

sion he made upon me was excellent. I am sure he would not fib, or put sticky things like chewing-gum or taffy under the teacher's chair, or pins in the benches where we girls sit, or pepper in the singing-books."

"But how can you be sure of all this?"

With enchanting innocence the child pointed to her heart, as she replied:

"I have a feeling here which tells me it is as I say, *Ach, verehrte Frau!* Guido looks just like the English poet Byron when he was a little boy. My father has a print of him in his study. No, I am quite certain that Guido is never horrid and naughty."

The child's ingenuousness was delicious. Frau Ursula stooped and kissed Elschen. She kissed Elschen delicately, as if fearing that the child's flesh might be susceptible to injury if more robustly saluted. In Frau Ursula's eyes there was a curious yearning—the look of the daughterless woman. Covetousness entered her heart. This—this she had missed and was missing because her marriage to Hauser had been a failure. She felt the unfairness of blaming Hauser, and yet she did blame him. The passion which he had not disguised in the early days of their marriage had offended her, but his diffidence offended her just as much now. She told herself that if he had not been such a wretched psychologist, he would have intuitively reversed those emotions and ensured his happiness as well as her own.

Her attention reverted to Elschen. She dipped into the future. Covetousness pursued a different lane, and at the end of it Frau Ursula with eyes of augury beheld blazoned an epithalamium.

She bade the lovely little creature farewell, inviting her to come and see Guido at once and not to wait either for spring or autumn flowers. Then she walked rapidly away, determined to indulge in no useless repining. But the elemental instinct which the little girl had aroused in her harassed her cruelly. In the early days of her marriage to the *Rittergustbesitzer* whenever she had considered the possibility of maternity, she had always longed for a daughter. That, perhaps, was not so strange, for she did not love her husband and a daughter would have belonged more intimately to herself than to him. But—and this was

strange—in the dreams which she had woven about Guido von Estritz when their friendship was young, her dimly perceived and yet articulate maternal longings had always gravitated about the image of a female child. That image had been very much like Elschen in lineament and spirit, and she had, in consequence, taken Elschen to her heart the first time she had seen her.

Frau Ursula was now thirty-three years old. Abroad, in the older countries, that age might place a woman in the Methusalah class. Not so in the United States. Over and above her passionate adoration for Guido, her heart cried out for the love of other children and above all, with an insistence which was at times ruthless, for the affection and devotion and moral support of a mate.

She was within several blocks of their apartment when she caught sight of a man walking rapidly down Maple Street, which traversed Bismarck Street at right angles. The corner lot was vacant, and she had an unimpeded view of the pedestrian. He and she were equi-distant from the point of intersection of the streets, and thus were destined to meet. The man swung along easily. She liked the cut of his fashionable overcoat. As the distance between him and herself diminished, she gave a sudden gasp of surprise. The man whose appearance had pleased her so greatly was Hauser.

A sudden feeling of intimacy, of good-fellowship, of liking invaded her. For once she did not stem the tide of her friendliness. It amused her to think that she had not recognized him. She recalled his appearance at the time of their marriage. How vulgar and cheap and cringing he had appeared to her at that time! How dignified and self-respecting he seemed now! Surely, the outward change for the better must be accompanied by an inner change. America must have transformed not merely the outer husk of the man, but the inner man as well.

Suddenly, she could not have said why, she felt culpable, dishonest, mean and base.

They were now within ten paces of each other, and still he did not see her. He would have passed her, if following a generous impulse, she had not pronounced his name.

"Erich," she cried, in a low voice.

Frau Ursula never forgot the look that came into her

husband's face when he saw her. It was a look of radiant joy, a look so intense and penetrating that it touched her as the prick of a white-hot needle might have done. It abashed her. She regretted having spoken to him. She felt that she had taken an unfair advantage. In his surprise he was allowing her to look into the very depths of his soul. As he stood looking at her without speaking, he seemed to her a different man from the Hauser she had known and despised. The strange sense of intimacy which she had experienced was wiped away. He now seemed to her an utter stranger and she had committed an indiscretion in hailing him.

With a closer approach to coquetry than her manner to him had ever shown, she said:

"And do you never look at any woman whom you pass in the street?"

"Never," he replied, soberly. "I have eyes for one woman only, yourself; and you know it."

"To-day not even for me," she retorted, a little confused by an almost tragic note in his voice. "And do you know," she continued, hurriedly, "I did not know you in that overcoat."

"I am wearing it for the first time," he said.

"Were you going home?" she inquired.

"No, I'm on my way to the store," he retorted. "But, if you don't mind, I should like to walk with you as far as the house."

"The street," she said, with an attempt at humor, "is a public thoroughfare and belongs equally to all."

"Yes, but the gift of your companionship lies with you, and, in my eyes, it is the most precious thing in the world."

Frau Ursula's heart began to beat wildly. His diffidence, then, had merely been assumed. Was this chance meeting in the street to mark a turning point in their lives? And suddenly, in an access of generosity, she blamed herself, herself wholly and solely, for the intolerable situation which had subsisted between them so long.

In her excitement she began to walk very rapidly, Hauser keeping pace with her.

"Ursula!"

"Yes?"

"Are you angry with me for saying that?"

"On the contrary—I am inclined to be a little angry with myself." She was thinking of the wasted years that yawned between them and which might still prove a more formidable barrier than coral reef or granite wall.

He misunderstood her words, of course. That—continuously misunderstanding each other—was one of the penalties which the wasted years exacted from both of them.

"Why angry with yourself, Ursula? Because you were sweet and kind to me? Ursula, if you did not mean it, why were you so kind to me just now?"

False modesty held her silent for a moment. She became embarrassed, and because she was embarrassed, she laughed. Instantly his eyes became hard and cruel. He looked at her menacingly. Quickly, barely realizing what she was doing, she slipped her hand through his arm.

"I like your overcoat," she said. "You asked me why I was kind to you. If you require an explanation, let us blame the overcoat. You seem like a different man to me in it."

"Ursula," Hauser said, gravely, "that is the first time I have ever heard you say anything puerile."

Some imp of mischief prompted her to go on teasing him. There are moments when the most serious-minded of women seeks refuge in seeming frivolity. If her life had depended upon it, Frau Ursula could not have been serious at the moment.

"Probably you have overestimated me in the past," she said, lightly.

"No, I have not overestimated you," Hauser replied. "You may have underestimated me, but I have not overestimated you. You are very fine. You—well, you are you, Ursula."

Frau Ursula blushed furiously. She tried to check both the color and the look of pleasure which had come to her eyes, but failed. She said, rather fatuously, as she was aware:

"Let's try and be better friends in future, Erich."

"I'm willing," he retorted, grimly.

They had reached their own gate by this time.

"Will you be home for lunch?" she inquired.

"No, not to-day." He raised his hat, and giving her a

sad, wan smile, left her. She watched him fascinatedly as he walked away.

Frau Ursula found Mrs. Thornton reading to Guido, and she was thankful for leisure to pursue her own thoughts. She asked herself whether it was possible that she had really come to care for Erich. Assuredly, his treatment of Guido was atrocious, but the veriest tyro in psychology would set that down to jealousy. She realized that, with the rectified impression of Hauser in her heart and mind, she was disposed to deal leniently with him. She wished to be lenient. It was no longer a question of expediency for Guido's sake, she wished to break with the irrevocable past and to begin a new life with her husband.

Nevertheless she was determined to speak to him very plainly regarding his treatment of Guido in the event that he should renew his wooing, which she felt fairly certain he would do.

Old Kaetchen was ill and she busied herself in the kitchen. The butcher had made a mistake in filling the order, and there were only enough chops for two. She decided, therefore, to get her own luncheon at the store.

To her dismay, just as she was carrying the tray for Mrs. Thornton and Guido to Guido's room, she heard her husband let himself in with his key. Hurriedly she set the tray down, and, having asked Mrs. Thornton to serve the meal, she ran back to the dining-room, nervously reviewing, as women will at such moments, the contents of her larder. There were eggs, of course, but Hauser never touched eggs excepting at breakfast. And there was a slice of cold roast beef, which he loathed, and some tinned cornbeef, of which he disapproved. She wondered whether she could cajole the butcher into sending her some more chops at once, or whether she should ask Mrs. Thornton to run down to Main Street for her. This, undoubtedly, would be the best plan. She was about to turn back from the dining-room, thinking herself unperceived by Hauser. But he had heard her and called to her to come in.

He stood at the table undoing a large package.

"We received a new line of toys at the store this morning," he said, without looking up, "and I brought home

a miniature race-course for Guido. D'you think he'll like it?"

Frau Ursula uttered an exclamation of surprise. The toy race-course was a very elaborate affair. There were six horses. Each horse was controlled by a target, and it was necessary to hit the bull's eye of the respective target in order to advance each horse six paces. The outer circles counted for less. It was a very handsome as well as a cleverly devised toy, for each miniature horse was covered with real hair—white, black, dappled, roan, gray and brown—and each jockey was perfectly equipped not only with an individual costume but with an individualized face, was, in fact, a tiny, beautifully conceived and beautifully executed natural doll. Frau Ursula thought the toy far too expensive and too handsome to be presented on any but a gala day, and said so, but her husband replied:

"Oh, let the poor little beggar have it now. Give it to him some time to-day."

"Won't you give it to him yourself?" she asked, pleadingly.

"If you wish it, certainly."

She did not follow her husband to Guido's room. She did not wish to divert attention to herself. She stood with her hands pressed to her bosom while she listened to Guido giving vent to rapturous exclamations of delight. Hauser's voice, pitched in an explanatory key, filled in the pauses. The face of the world was being transformed for her.

From the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step. With a jolt her mind came back to the deficiencies of the cupboard. She flew to the telephone. As Hauser was in Guido's room, she could not, unperceived, ask Mrs. Thornton to go to the butcher's for her. Nothing remained but to ask the butcher to shanghai some boy and send him up with the meat. Then, when she was through entreating the butcher to make an exception this once and send her the chops on the instant, she became aware that her husband was standing at her elbow.

"What made you do that?" he demanded.

"There's not a thing to eat in the house," she began, apologetically. She felt the disgrace involved in that confession.

Hauser laughed.

"What of it?" he said. "We are going out for our lunch. Surely, Ursula, you are not going to refuse me?"

She had not the slightest intention of refusing. She ran to her room blithely. Her pulses were stirred with the soft, eager excitement which fills a young girl on the evening of her first ball. She even hesitated over her dress, choosing first one and then another. Finally she decided to wear a gown of dark blue poplin trimmed with panne velvet and rich lace, which she had never worn. She had not worn it because dark blue was her husband's favorite color, a circumstance which she had totally forgotten until the finished dress was actually in her possession. And because she did not wish him to think she had chosen the dress to please him, she had refrained from wearing it. Now, reversing this psychology, she decided to wear the dress. It seemed fortuitous that she should have in her wardrobe a new gown which was certain to please her husband.

Suddenly, while she was dressing, a strange thing happened. There passed before her mind's eye the face of Guido von Estritz—the second Guido. It was one of those flashes of memory which spring from no known source of emotion, and which, unless some subsequent event gives them point, seem wholly inexplicable. The vision had power over her for a moment only. She was not a capricious woman, and she continued to dress herself as calmly as if Guido von Estritz had never existed.

Hauser had a taxicab at the door which brought them in less than five minutes to the Anasquoit *Hofbräuhaus*, noted for its excellent cuisine and its fine orchestra. Hauser's hand trembled as he helped his wife to alight. It was the first time in the twelve years of their married life that these two had sought any place of entertainment together.

She was a little surprised by his manner in ordering the repast. It was good, perhaps a trifle too peremptory, too patronizingly authoritative. But she was not in the mood to find fault with him. She wanted to gloss over his faults because she wanted desperately to be happy.

During the meal their conversation was conventional, and Frau Ursula began to wonder why he had brought her.

But when the last dishes had been removed, and the bill paid, Hauser came and sat beside his wife on the cushioned seat under the window which ran all around the spacious room. The murmur of the orchestra, distant from their table, made their words inaudible to all but themselves. Conversationally they were as isolated as if they had been stranded in the heart of the primeval forest.

"Ursula," said Hauser, "I have a good deal to say to you. May I say it now?"

She nodded assent.

"I want to tell you first of all about my plans for the immediate future."

"About the store?"

"No, I've told you all there is to tell about the Leviathan. I want to tell you about a house I intend to build."

"A house?" she demanded, in amazement.

"Yes, Ursula. In the olden days, abroad, before you came to Berlin, you were accustomed to live in luxury and in splendor. It has been the great ambition of my life to provide you with all you were formerly accustomed to. Before I met you my sole endeavor was to advance myself in the hope of some day becoming a *Kommerzienrat* or receiving a title. From the day I met you all my ambitions began to cluster about you. Oh, I know, of course, that if you had wished to use the interest of your boy's money, you could have lived quite splendidly. But that wasn't the point as far as I was concerned. I wanted to provide for you, and I meant to give you as good as you were used to abroad. It's been a long, hard fight, but I am winning out. I thank you for not using the interest of Guido's money to set up a fine menage for yourself. I regret that I have not been able to persuade you to refrain from paying for the boy's upkeep out of his own money. It was, perhaps, natural, that you should wish to do so. After all, that's neither here nor there. I'm going to repay you the money you loaned me in another half-year. I've made good with my small store. I made a small fortune. Then I speculated. I made more money, and the Leviathan will place us on a different social footing than before. I'm no longer in the pin and needle store category. I'm headed for the Macy and Wanamaker class."

"Ah," cried Frau Ursula, anxiously, "be careful. You've been doing things on such a tremendous scale. The expenses which you must be incurring terrify me."

"They need not. I've done nothing unadvisedly. I've a very comfortable bank account. All is going to go well. That is—if——" he broke off suddenly. "Ursula," he said, "I love you. I made you very angry when we were first married by making love to you. So I desisted. But I've loved you right along. And I've labored and striven—slaved, as the Americans say—to make good in a big way because I realized that therein lay my one chance of winning you."

"You hoped to buy me?" Frau Ursula inquired, gently reproachful.

"You know very well that was not what I meant. By arousing your pride in me and in my success I hoped that you would come to care for me."

"Ah!" she exclaimed, wondering at his unexpected insight into the feminine soul.

"Perceive," he said, speaking with a gentleness of which she had not thought him capable, "that I am paying you the very great compliment of supposing that you might feel pride in a self-made man. We've both changed immeasurably since coming to America."

"Have I changed also?" she asked.

Hauser laughed, but did not reply. Frau Ursula colored lightly. Although she criticised him incessantly, it irritated her to think that he criticised her.

"I know I've changed," she conceded. "I was a good deal of a snob abroad."

"How could you have escaped the taint!" he exclaimed. "I confess, I am still fond of titles. Have you outgrown the weakness completely?"

"I've never thought about it," she replied.

"Then you have," he said, with decision. "But at any rate, you haven't outgrown your fondness for a mansion—at least I hope you haven't. For I want you to have the finest house in all Anasquoit."

"I don't want you to do anything rash," she said. "I am contented where I am."

"But I'm not. I want to see you in a proper setting at last—rich hangings and draperies, marble statuary and

palms, hand-carved mahogany, rare etchings, a few oils and water-colors, perhaps a dry-point or two. And nothing but sterling silver, cut-glass and crystal chandeliers."

"Ah!" she cried, a little amused by his boyish enthusiasm, "is it a home or a museum you intend building?"

"Forgive me," he said, smiling gravely, "but that blessed house has been my favorite relaxation for years. Often, when I lay awake at night, I pictured you surrounded by beautiful and costly things, by the homage of admiring friends, by everything that makes life worth while. Your life there has been so meager, so inadequate, so poor in everything that dignifies life and ennobles it and raises it above the level of mere animal existence."

Frau Ursula was genuinely touched at last. She laid her hand upon his and pressed it gently. He started, then, very quickly, before she could hinder him, he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

For a few minutes after that they both employed themselves assiduously in scanning the room to perceive if they had been observed. Reassured that no one had perceived them, Hauser resumed.

He had, he said, first thought of building the house and presenting it to her as a surprise. But he had thought better of that scheme. He thought that in all probability his wife would prefer to select her own house—site, plans and all. He had in view two sites, both on Bismarck Street. The site corner of Rhododendron Street was the larger of the two, but he feared that the neighborhood was being disintegrated as a residential section. Dr. Koenig's house, near Tamarack Street, had already depreciated in value, and Hauser feared that the process of commercializing the lower part of Bismarck Street would take place so rapidly as to extend to Rhododendron and even to Papaw Street within another decade or two. Therefore he considered the other site preferable. It was located on Bismarck corner off Hemlock, ran all the way down to Main and extended back half a block along Bismarck toward Ironwood Street. Frau Ursula knew the block well. It was one of the most desirable blocks in Anasquoit and commanded a view of the river. She could not suppress an exclamation of pleasure.

Hauser continued:

"The frost will be out of the ground in another fortnight," he said. "If we begin building in April, we will be able to move into the house next autumn. I will have the furnace going full blast for a week before we move in. That will make you feel safe in taking Guido into a new house."

"Ah," Frau Ursula exclaimed, "that is kind of you, Erich."

"And of course," he went on hurriedly, as if ashamed of his generous thought, "as soon as we have moved into the Leviathan you are not going to come to the store any more. The restaurant will be in charge of a chef. You're going to stay at home and enjoy your leisure and your friends."

"I haven't many," she remarked, a little sadly.

✓ "But you will have," he assured her, hopefully. "I'm getting Baumgarten to put me up at the *Deutsche Verein*. I couldn't have asked it of him before—a pin and needle vender. But now things are different. You'll find yourself with plenty of friends presently."

(A look of comic dismay spread over Frau Ursula's face. Like Dr. Koenig, though in less degree, she mistrusted racial clannishness, and the particular brand of tribal snobbishness bred by the *Deutsche Verein* she had always held in particular detestation. Was the old *Strebernatur* going to re-emerge just when she had begun to think it laid away forever? She checked her annoyance. She passionately desired not to be unjust to him again.

"I do not know that I will care very much for the *Deutsche Verein* and its set," she said mildly.

"Won't you?" he seemed disappointed. "I thought you'd like the idea. The best people belong to it, you know."

"Yes, of course," she forced herself to concede, "but you see, Guido takes up all of my leisure time," she stopped abruptly, fearing that her mention of the boy's name would evoke one of his quick rages. But all he said was:

"Guido is getting better rapidly, and Mrs. Thornton is both competent and kind. You should try and get some enjoyment out of life."

"Oh, I get a good deal of enjoyment, though not as much as I would like," she replied, the vision of a little girl like Elschen Marlow trembling uncertainly before her mind's eye.

"The 'good deal' I suppose is supplied by Guido, and the 'not as much' by myself," said Hauser, sarcastic for the first time.

"Don't you think that's a little unfair?" she asked.

"Unfair? To you or to me or to Guido?"

She smarted under his change of manner, but she was determined not to lose her temper.

"If anything," she replied, calmly, "it is too generous to Guido."

"You surprise me!" There was no sarcasm in Hauser's voice now, merely astonishment.

"Guido," she continued, "has of course been a source of great joy to me, but he has also been a grievous anxiety and responsibility."

"When we speak of a responsibility," said Hauser, "we usually allow it to be inferred that we are responsible to someone as well as for someone. Pray, to whom are you answerable for Guido?"

"I am answerable for him to my conscience," his wife replied, with unresentful dignity.

The answer seemed subtly to displease Hauser. Without replying, he dropped his eyes.

"Hauser," said Frau Ursula, quickly, "a moment ago you were so kind about Guido—in regard to the new house, I mean. And yet you dislike him. Why do you dislike the child so much?"

"Do I dislike him? I'll not admit that," said Hauser. "To admit that were to throw away my last chance of winning your love."

"Ah," she exclaimed, "you must not side-track me. I must intercede with you for Guido. Can I not prevail upon you to treat him with some degree of kindness?"

"You are accusing me of unkindness in the past," he said, an undercurrent of anger in his voice.

Frau Ursula broke into an impassioned plea.

"I know it cannot be pleasant for you to have a strange child in your house. But you know that the boy was the reason of our marriage. Without Guido our marriage would not have taken place. If you love me, as you say you do, do not harbor this unnatural resentment against the boy. He brought us together, and—forgive me if I appear indelicate—it is his money, you know, or rather the money which

I received from his mother, to which you owe your present prosperity."

"I do not like to be reminded of that," said Hauser, frowning. "It makes me feel savage. It makes me feel as if my prosperity were doomed to terminate abruptly, as if I had done something base and low in accepting the loan. Perhaps I did. Yet, God knows, my reasons for marrying you were not wholly sordid and mercenary."

"I know that," she hastened to assure him. "I know that. Hence my candor. I have longed in the past to feel that I might carry my worries about Guido to you, I have longed to feel that I could come to you for advice. I have longed to feel——" she stopped abruptly, and then concluded rather lamely, "——just that." This, however, was not what she had intended to say. She was a woman of infinite pride, of exaggerated modesty, and although fully assured that her husband still loved her, she hesitated to tell him that she yearned for his love even as he yearned for hers."

"I'll try to be decent in the future," he said. "If I fail you must ascribe my failure to the plea which is as old as Adam, 'the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.'"

"Just what does that mean—in this connection?" his wife inquired.

"Ursula!" his voice vibrated with sudden white-hot passion. "Put yourself in my place, if you can. Woman's passions are so much milder than man's, so much softer, less violent that I doubt whether you can fully understand. I love you. I have loved you passionately, and reverently as well, for twelve years. If the element of reverence in my love were not very strong, if it did not predominate over every other feeling, would I, could I have suffered all I did for your sake? For twelve years we two have lived, eaten, slept in the same house. For twelve years I have daily seen you lavish love, kisses, caresses upon a child not mine. Can you comprehend that my heart has become a seething mass of conflicting passions? Often, often I have thought that jealousy and despair would drive me mad. I felt like a beggar condemned to look on at a perpetual banquet and going hungry himself. I am not minimizing what you did for me in many ways. You kept my house in order. My dinner was always well cooked, my clothes were mended, my socks were darned. But all the physical comfort with which you

surrounded me was a sham and a hollow pretext because love was lacking. Why, there is more love in the word of rebuke which you occasionally address to the boy than in the kindest thing you have ever said to me. And, Ursula, there is the earthly tie of marriage——. I do not wish to dwell overmuch on that. Yet here I am, a married man, married to the woman whom I adore and idolize, yet I am condemned to live as a celibate in immediate proximity to her. Surely, Ursula, surely, you must vaguely comprehend the torture-chamber in which I have lived all this time.”

Hauser's wife was conscience-stricken. She was also a little outraged, as women are prone to be when brought face to face with the elemental passions and facts of life.

“If it is not too late,” she began, feebly.

“If——” he said, reproachfully.

“It is not too late,” she said, firmly, blushing at her own courage.

“Ursula!” he cried. He was deeply touched as she could see. For a few moments he did not trust himself to speak. Then he said:

“Come, dear wife, let us go.”

It was half past three and Ursula supposed that Hauser would proceed to the store after dropping her at their home. He, however, dismissed the taxi, and after helping her to alight, followed her in silence to their apartment. She divested herself of her coat and gloves while he stood watching her, a smile on his lips, admiration and love in his eyes.

“Ursula!”

His arms were outstretched, on his face a look of mute appeal. Very quietly she went to him and flung herself with a sob upon his breast. Once more the vision of Guido von Estritz flashed upon her consciousness. As if to escape it, she lifted her face to Hauser and received his kiss.

“Now I am his wife, indeed,” she thought, “and no other man, dead or alive, has part in me.”

The sound of approaching footsteps sent her away from his arms and from his side, so new was their sense of possession. Old Kaetchen, risen from her bed of illness, was at the door, clamoring to be told the menu for the evening meal.

Hauser, with a smile, bade his wife adieu and effaced himself.

Alone at last, Frau Ursula bowed her head in silent prayer upon her hands. Guido was going to get well. Hauser had promised to be kind and so had she——! The shadows were clearing at last, and, as was her habit when deeply moved, she murmured a verse, from Schiller, which was apposite to her mood:

"O Koenigin, O Koenigin, das Leben ist doch schoen."

She had the sensation that her life heretofore had been a desert, that she was out of it at last and that her path henceforth must run alongside of shining and happily murmuring waters.

Poor Ursula! Perhaps every life is more or less of a desert, and if so no final escape is possible from it. Oases punctuate it here and there and most of us must be satisfied if we at times hit upon a spacious, kindly, fragrance-laden one where we may linger for a while.

She had reached not even an oasis. She had merely glimpsed a mirage. The sands of bitterness and gloom still lay stretched before her.

CHAPTER VII

A LITTLE later Frau Ursula went to the store, but she was not in a mood for work and after a quarter of an hour of perfunctory inspection, she returned to her home. Mrs. Thornton had gone off for an afternoon in New York, with some friends, and Frau Ursula expected to find Guido alone.

On entering the apartment she heard voices in the parlor, and concluded that Otto was still with Guido, but she became aware, almost immediately that it was not Otto's boyish treble, roughened by the miscellaneous uses of boyhood, that overlapped and impinged on Guido's clear bell-like voice. It was a man's barytone that was speaking; it was, moreover, a foreign, not an American voice, and the German which the stranger spoke was broken, although fluent enough.

Frau Ursula, curiosity alert, went to the parlor. No instinct warned her against the shock which awaited her.

As she entered, Guido flew to the door to meet her.

"Oh, *Mutterchen!* I've had a wonderful time. This gentleman told me all about Russia and a lady with a name like a princess in a fairy tale. And she is a princess and they threw her into prison because she was so kind to the poor. And he is a prince, too. Isn't it wonderful? I cannot remember the names, but the prince says it doesn't matter—no one can, unless they're Russians themselves."

Frau Ursula stood frozen to the spot. For one moment her heart seemed to stop beating. Then it hammered so furiously that her ears were filled with a strange buzzing sound. It was with a very white face that she confronted her visitor.

He had risen and was bowing to her with the stately punctilio of the educated European.

"Permit me to introduce myself," he said. "I am Dmitri Stepanovich. I am the cousin of Varvara Alexandrovna."

Guido clapped his hands.

"Aren't those names perfectly beautiful, Mother?" he demanded, ecstatically.

Frau Ursula turned faint.

"Guido," she said, "I think Kaetchen has your *Vesperbrod* ready for you in the kitchen."

"I do not want any *Vesperbrod*," cried the excited child,

"If you please, Guido," said Frau Ursula in a voice which brooked no opposition. Reluctantly, with dragging feet, the boy went from the room.

At the door he turned.

"You won't go away before I have seen you again, will you?" he called from the threshold to his new friend, in his most ingratiating way.

"I think not," Prince Vasalov called back.

Thereupon Guido bowed to the Prince, and the Prince, with the utmost gravity, bowed to the boy.

While this little by-play was going on, Frau Ursula scrutinized Prince Vasalov closely. He was tall, thin to emaciation, with a clear pallid skin and a mass of black hair which he wore somewhat longer than prescribed by custom. His features were very fine. He bore a striking likeness to his cousin. They might have been twins, so like they were.

Perhaps, for that reason, Frau Ursula felt an immediate acrid dislike for him. She was, as a rule, the most self-controlled of women, but now she gave full rein to her animosity. Who observes ceremony of manners at a shipwreck or an earthquake? The rights of others, of course, must be respected at times of general upheaval. But Vasalov had no rights. So Frau Ursula told herself. Her thoughts were turbulent. "Whatever happens, he cannot take Guido from me," she assured herself. "He simply cannot." Nevertheless she quailed in spirit.

"Why have you come here?" she demanded, as soon as they were alone, and she had closed the door to the hall. She spoke as a person destitute of compassion might speak to a beggar. "What do you want?"

Dmitri Stepanovich gave no sign of surprise further than that he threw her a sharp look.

"If by 'here' you mean this country," he said, aloofly, "I can satisfy your curiosity in a few words. I am a political refugee."

At these words all the disdain, the scorn, the contempt,

the black fury which had been allowed to smoulder in Frau Ursula's heart came to the surface. What an unmitigated nuisance Guido's Russian kin were, anyhow!

"I suppose that means that you have murdered someone, doesn't it?" Frau Ursula questioned in the same insolent tone in which she had spoken before.

Vasalov smiled detachedly.

"I have rid the fair earth of two outrageous tyrants," he replied, calmly. "Beasts of prey—both of them, in more ways than one. The human race is better off for being rid of them."

"You should write a treatise justifying crime," said Frau Ursula, disdainfully.

Dmitri Stepanovich gave her a searching look.

"You are very angry," he said, coolly, "otherwise you would not treat a guest with such deliberate discourtesy. Will you permit me to state my errand to you?"

"I asked for it before."

"I have a message for you from Varvara Alexandrovna."

"Then they did not recapture her? She is not dead?"

"I am sorry to disappoint you. They recaptured her—yes; but she is alive."

"Ah!" cried Frau Ursula, her wild alarm getting the better of her prudence. "She cannot claim the boy now. He belongs to me. I've brought him up. He has been ill all his little life and he is far from strong even now. It would kill him to be taken away from me. It might kill him even to be told that I am not his mother. For he loves me—loves me——" she began to sob and the tears ran down her cheeks.

"Compose yourself," Vasalov replied, gently. "I assure you the boy is not to be taken away from you. There has been no such thought in Varvara Alexandrovna's mind. She would not wish to separate the child from you even if she were to regain her liberty, a contingency which is virtually beyond the pale of the possible."

These words, hinting as they did that an irrevocable fate held in its cast-iron meshes the woman for whom Frau Ursula had felt such a bitter abhorrence, had a strange effect upon Frau Ursula. She ceased hating Guido's mother, now feeling for her a compassion which approximated in strength the anger which had previously filled her.

"Varvara Alexandrovna escaped from Siberia years ago," said Frau Ursula. "She may do so again."

"She is not in Siberia now," said Prince Vasalov, somberly.

"Then, where?"

"In the fortress at Schlusselfurg, in solitary confinement. She has been there for over a decade."

Frau Ursula clasped her hands to her bosom in dismay. She was not a highly imaginative woman, but no great reaches of fantasy are required to apprehend the horrors of solitary confinement. She had wished Madame von Estritz dead scores of times, she had contemplated the possibility of a Siberian sentence with the greatest equanimity; but, even if she had hated Varvara Alexandrovna a thousand times more than she had hated her in her most bitter moments, she would not have wished to think of Guido's mother as a captive in a lonely cell.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, involuntarily, and with such genuine feeling that Vasalov softened perceptibly. "I am sorry!" she said.

"Yes, it is a harsh fate," he responded, dismally. "But she has borne it bravely, proudly, nobly as becomes a daughter of the Vasalovs."

Frau Ursula stared. She said nothing.

"She has been fortunate in one thing," Vasalov continued; "she has been able to communicate with the outside world. She has been able to send us secret messages, and to receive secret messages in return. She has dictated editorials for our propaganda leaflets and she keeps in close touch with the Cause."

"I do not follow you. How is that possible?"

"I am not at liberty to explain," Vasalov said, smiling. The method in which she communicates with us is a jealously guarded secret, and not more than four persons are in the secret. Suffice it to say that we receive these messages from her, and her last message, sent after she had learned that I had fled to America, is the message which I have come here to deliver in person, and which concerns her son."

Frau Ursula steeled herself against a resurgence of hatred for the woman who was suffering so cruelly.

"May I give you the message now?" Vasalov inquired.

Frau Ursula inclined her head.

"First of all Varvara Alexandrovna bids me thank you for all you have done for her son. She bids me say also that she is certain that you have been faithful to your trust, generously faithful—she termed it. I believe she expressed some wishes concerning the boy's education."

"Yes, and they are being closely observed."

"She is certain of that. Her faith in you is sublime. It is because of her supreme belief in your goodness and nobility that she ventures to trouble you once more in relation to the further education of her son."

Truculence came back to Frau Ursula's heart, but she did not allow her anger to usurp the sway of mind and heart as before.

"Please continue," she said, quietly.

"It occurred to her, it seems, that there was one item of her boy's education for which she had not provided in her talk with you, probably because it was so self-evident a phase. It is possible that you have thought of it by yourself. She desires particularly that I should stress this point—she is convinced that if you have thought of it you have also provided for it. The point is this. If the boy is to be of any use to Russia when he has grown to manhood, he will have to be able to speak and read and write Russian."

"Ah!" Frau Ursula exclaimed, her resentment again at hightide. Did these people think she was rearing the boy in the expectation of seeing him turn nihilist? Was the Synthesis only a blind? Through her talks with Dr. Koenig she had come to have some little faith in the Synthetic Experiment. It might be more of a success than the Vasalovs wished or expected.

Wisdom counseled her to be prudent. She did not entirely believe Vasalov's asseveration that there was no intention of removing the boy from her charge. Her notion of the Vasalov morality was very low, as we know, and she did not doubt that men and women who did not stick at murder, would not hesitate to lie, to deceive, to rob and to kidnap, if any of these amiable diversions fell in with their plans.

Dmitri Stepanovich misunderstood her exclamation.

"I see you have already thought of it," he exclaimed, almost joyously.

His exclamation, and the unconscious homage which it tendered Frau Ursula, revealed a tacit assumption on his part that she was not as violently out of sympathy with the Cause as she had at first given him to understand. Prudence again counseled her to be cautious.

"No," she replied, carelessly, "I did not think of it. It is, however, an oversight which can easily be remedied."

"You are willing then, that Guido shall be taught Russian?"

"Why not?" she parried, with an indifference which was not wholly assumed. She had the love of languages and of lingual accomplishment possessed by every cultivated European.

"That is very fine of you," Vasalov exclaimed, heartily. "And you say you are observing Varvara Alexandrovna's wishes in other respects, also?"

"I am," said Frau Ursula frostily. "You understand, however, that Guido is very young. With the assistance of an old friend, a man of exceptional culture and intelligence, I have mapped out a definite plan of No-Bias which I am going to practice actively in the boy's upbringing."

"Ah!" Vasalov exclaimed. "You are indeed a noble woman. Russia, the entire world may some day stand your debtor for what you are doing. Observe, if you please, that I ask no questions, demand no information excepting such as you may wish to give me. Now that I have met you I completely share my kinswoman's faith in you. I ask one thing only—may I be permitted to select Guido's Russian teacher?"

Their eyes met in a prolonged, intense gaze. Frau Ursula was tingling in every nerve with excitement. A flashing, blinding suspicion had taken possession of her. She did not doubt that Prince Vasalov would select a political refugee, like himself, to instruct the boy not only in Russian but in all the odious commonplace of the "Cause." Her impotence to cope with the situation maddened her. She made an almost physical effort to restrain the words of defiance which were rising to her lips. She must be crafty and shrewd and meet deception with deceit. How opportunely she had made her peace with Hauser? He would protect her and the boy and send about his business this gentlemanly ruffian, who, without a doubt, wished to have her beautiful boy in-

structed in crime systematically, for she was certain, now that she had had a moment's time to reflect, that the study of Russian was merely a subterfuge.

She might, of course, refuse to allow him to select Guido's teacher. But what would she gain? She entertained a profound mistrust for all Russians. The spirit of mistrust, of contempt, of hatred and vindictiveness and fear for and of other races and other peoples which is rife in every European country, which is the moral pabulum of the European grown-up, and the spiritual pap on which the European child is nurtured, and has been nurtured for centuries, had not been entirely eliminated from Frau Ursula's mental make-up. She no longer regarded Italians, Spaniards, the French, the Irish with any particular degree of scorn or alarm. They were human, like Germans and Americans, as she had gleaned from her intercourse with them while in America. But it so happened that she had encountered no Russians in America. Her experience with Russians was limited to her excursion into Russia to succor Varvara Alexandrovna's babe. She can hardly be blamed if the experiences which befell her on that expedition did not raise her opinion of Russians in general.

So she had gone on mistrusting all Russians on general principles. She didn't believe there was a really "nice" Russian in all America—or anywhere else, for that matter. No, decidedly, nothing was to be gained by denying Vasalov the privilege of selecting Guido's teacher. She supposed he might be trusted to find someone whose personal character, at least, was good. It would be unpleasant to lock away all the silver plate and jewelry every time Guido's teacher came to the house!

She said, hypocritically:

"If you had not suggested finding Guido a Russian teacher, I would have asked you to do so."

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" To her intense amazement the deceitful, murderous Russian became quite discursive. "You understand, of course, that I will try to find a Russian who is thoroughly familiar with the aspirations and the work of the Intelligentsia. Varvara Alexandrovna sees no way of initiating her son in the devious ways of Russian Life and Russian Politics and of familiarizing him with the rudimentary problems which confront Russians to-day ex-

cepting in this way—through close companionship with a man who is Russian to the very backbone.”

The effrontery of it! Frau Ursula caught her breath. She could contain her indignation no longer.

“In brief,” she said, “under guise of teaching Guido Russian, you intend to warp his moral sense. I’ll never consent to it, never!”

Vasalov looked at her in surprise. Suddenly he comprehended. His pale face flushed angrily, but he regained his self-control in a moment.

“Permit me to ask,” he said with the greatest urbanity, “how do you expect to inculcate in Guido an unbiased attitude of mind when you yourself are so lamentably biased?”

“Biased!” Frau Ursula’s face grew dark with anger. She threw prudence to the winds. She no longer endeavored to maintain a tranquil appearance. “Biased!” she repeated, furiously. “You call an honest aversion to crime being biased!” She made many bitter and unjustifiable accusations in the fierce torrent of chaotic anger with which her lips overflowed. She said some detestable things. She had lost complete control of her tongue.

Once or twice Vasalov bit his lips, but long before Frau Ursula had finished, he was as tranquil and composed as ever. His composure seemed as impervious to windy anger as a raincoat is to rain.

“You misunderstand us—myself—entirely,” he said, when Frau Ursula finally stopped. “Varvara Alexandrovna made the proviso that although the Russian teacher must be well acquainted with the aims of the Intelligentsia, he must not be a political refugee, must not be what is commonly called a nihilist—although we in Russia do not use the term—must not have dabbled in any political plots in Russia. She made this proviso for reasons which I do not think you are capable of comprehending.”

Vasalov’s insolence stung Frau Ursula cruelly, but she determined, on the spur of the moment, to ignore it as completely as he had ignored the accusations leveled against himself.

“I will raise no objections to any one who is not a professional in crime,” she said, contemptuously.

This time she had the satisfaction of seeing Vasalov catch his breath.

"You realize, of course," she continued, speaking with a magnificent assurance which she was far from feeling, "that it lies well within my rights and my power to refuse Varvara Alexandrovna's request. I promised her nothing, save only that I would care well for the boy and that I would take him to America. I listened respectfully to her wishes. I am observing them, as a matter of courtesy. But there is no reason under the sun why I should further burden myself by observing requests brought by an emissary without any credentials whatsoever. Nor did Varvara Alexandrovna stipulate for codicils to the scheme of education which she outlined to me, and which, Heaven knows, was complicated enough.

"This request can hardly be termed a codicil," Vasalov said, speaking quietly. "A codicil alters, changes or modifies an existing status, while this suggestion is absolutely in line with previously expressed wishes."

"I do not concede that. It gives you people an undue preponderance."

"I think not. As Guido is living in America it is unavoidable that he is freely imbibing the American view-point. He lives among Germans, therefore the German viewpoint is not foreign to him——"

"I protest against being called a German. Both my husband and myself are American citizens."

"I spoke of race, of course. Obviously the Russian view-point is being neglected, through no fault of yours. We wish to present it to the lad, without unduly influencing him. I give you my sacred promise on that score. You must see for yourself that if the experiment is to be a fair one, and is to be made under test conditions, the boy must have a chance to become intimately acquainted with as many different nationalities as possible and with the political systems which they have evolved or are in process of evolving. Varvara Alexandrovna's faith in the Synthesis is phenomenal."

"And have you faith in it also?"

Prince Vasalov considered this for a moment before replying.

"I confess," he said, finally, "my faith was as a mustard seed until I saw the boy."

"And do you think—I am asking without malice—that the boy will be a partisan of your Cause?"

"I am by no means certain of that. The boy has enthusiasm, certainly, but his enthusiasm seems to run riot. It is ubiquitous and indiscriminating. It fastens upon every subject that is broached. His appetite for life is tremendous. Quite tremendous. As yet his enthusiasm lacks focus completely. This may due to his extreme youth, to lack of direction, or again, it may be a temperamental peculiarity, reaching back to some forgotten Russian forbear, for enthusiasm running wild is a distinctly Russian trait. However, it does not follow from all this that his enthusiasm is not capable of being focused. I believe it is—for the boy has rare intelligence. But even if this should be so, it does not mean that he will embrace our views." Vasalov came to a dead stop, but Frau Ursula perceived that he had something more to say and waited patiently for him to resume. Her respect for his mentality had grown apace with his words. His analysis of Guido's salient characteristic was eerily true; she herself could not have bettered it in substance; she herself, she was generous enough to admit, could not have presented it so pithily.

"You realize, of course," Vasalov continued presently, "that both Varvara Alexandrovna and Guido von Estritz were violent partisans. But because they were honest and well-meaning and respected each other very thoroughly, both hoped that their offspring should effect a Synthesis rather than become a votary of any one existing culture. And I need not add, I hope, that Guido's mother was as sincere in this desire as his father was. So you perceive, *verehrte Frau*, that if I were to endeavor to make a Russophile of the lad, I would be faithless to my mission. I trust, after all I have said, that you will abandon your very evident mistrust of myself."

He rose to go. As he stood there, she noted the comeliness of his person, the fine distinction of his beautifully modeled face. And again she was struck by the strong resemblance which he bore to his cousin.

"I hope to find a Russian tutor within a week or so," he said. "May I see the boy before I go?"

"He has had enough excitement for one day," said Frau Ursula evasively.

"Just as you say," said Vasalov politely.

She regretted her petty display of power over the child's person immediately, but Vasalov did not remonstrate with her as she had expected he would do. He took his leave with out offering any comment.

Guido came storming into the room, crammed with questions and with disappointment.

"You must not tease me to-night, Guido," Frau Ursula said, petulantly, "I am very tired. I will send Mrs. Thornton to you as soon as she gets home. Now go to your room and don't bother me."

Guido looked at his mother in amazement. Never had she spoken to him so summarily before. He obeyed her instantly, however, and Frau Ursula was free to seek the seclusion of her own room.

Her rasped nerves cried imperiously for solitude. Her heart was a battle-field, her mind tempest-tossed. All her native poise was turned awry by the unexpected advent of Dmitri Stepanovich. Had ever a woman been tried as sorely as herself? For a few minutes she indulged in the luxury of self-pity and hatred for the Vasalovs, mischievous associates that vitiated her morality to the extent of permitting her to entertain the idea of proclaiming Dmitri Stepanovich an impostor and handing him over to the police for attempted intimidation.

Then, through the unlovely maze of sinister thoughts there struggled the vision of a woman who, when Frau Ursula had last seen her, had been young and as attractive as herself, with a babe at her breast, terror-stricken for her babe's sake, strangely composed and courageous as to any fate that awaited herself. She tried to picture Varvara Alexandrovna now, twelve years later, immured in a dim and probably foul dungeon, living on coarse, insufficient food, clad in hideous, inadequate garments, destitute of every comfort and every decency of life, yet preserving throughout the harrowing ordeal an unshaken faith in the cause for which she was suffering, and a mind so alert and luminous that from her tiny cell she sent out messages and instructions which re-echoed throughout Russia—perhaps throughout the world.

Her anger was quenched. She could not, she dared not disregard a wish expressed by a woman suffering such a

martyrdom. And for that martyred woman's sake, for the sake of herself and of Guido's father as well, she would see to it that there was fair play. For she did not trust Vasalov in spite of his professions of good faith. She would watch the Russian tutor selected by Vasalov carefully and review Guido's lessons, a task easy of accomplishment, for the lad was in the habit of telling her in detail every occurrence of his uneventfully important day.

She changed to a housedress and went to the dining-room to inquire after the progress dinner was making. To her surprise she found her husband sitting at his own place at the table, his folded hands before him crushing down the unread evening paper.

"Who was your visitor?" he asked, sharply.

"Prince Vasalov," she said. "How did you know someone was here?"

"I came home early—heard your voice and a man's—you seemed terribly stirred. I kept out of the room purposely."

The excitement which had stirred Frau Ursula earlier in the afternoon, returned.

"I hate him," she said, bitterly. "I think he is as wicked and as unscrupulous as a man can be. It is fortunate that you did not come into the room. I should have been tempted to ask you to throw him out."

"Beastly impudence to come here at all now. How did he find out your whereabouts?"

"I don't know," she replied, blankly. "I never thought to ask him. Probably he traced me through the bank in which Varvara Alexandrovna's money was deposited."

"What did he want?"

"Guido is to learn Russian," she replied, gloomily. "I hate the idea of it—not of his studying Russian, of course, but of the leverage which the Vasalovs thus obtain for launching their ideas into the impressionable mind of the boy. I hate this interference. I hate him. I hate his claiming the privilege of selecting the tutor."

"Claiming!" Hauser exclaimed, with an oath. "The fellow has no right to claim anything whatever. I hope you told him so."

"How could I? After all, he represents Guido's mother."

Hauser, unaccountably, was here seized with a spasm

of such black fury that Frau Ursula shrank back abashed.

"If the scoundrel dares to come here again I'll break his neck for him," he shouted, "and spare the Russian police the trouble." He sprang from his chair, and pushed it away angrily.

"Nothing would please me better," Frau Ursula exclaimed, with great earnestness. "But, of course, that would never do." They were standing close together, near the mantle. "Oh, Erich," said Frau Ursula, with sudden abandon, "I am so miserable."

Without a word he drew her protectively into the circle of his arm and she rested her head against his shoulder, deriving from that position a sense of support and comfort which filled her with amazement. Did she care for him so much as all that? How blind, how willfully blind and unkind she had been both to him and to herself.

"Why did he have to come to-day of all days?" Hauser's wife pursued, presently. "We were so happy at last, you and I. Never mind, we will be happy anyhow. And if he is inclined to molest me, I will leave you to deal with him. You will, won't you, Erich dear?"

She felt his clasp upon her waist tighten convulsively.

"I thank God you take that view of it, Ursula," he said with a solemnity which seemed to her exaggerated. "Try not to worry about him. His rascality seems to know no bounds. If he comes again I'll settle him once for all."

Frau Ursula did not reply. But she lifted her head from her husband's shoulder, and gently drew away from his arms. A strange inflection in his voice, certain phrases which he used, certain words as well, pierced through her self-centeredness at last. Hauser's attitude was that of a man who has suffered a personal affront. Why should he feel thus toward Dmitri Stepanovich? He had not the motive which she had. He had no motive whatever excepting vicarious interest, for her sake, in Guido's welfare, and until now his interest in the boy had not been very keen. Why then should he indulge in such caustic language?

"How long since you saw Vasalov last?" Hauser inquired.

"Why, I've never seen him before."

"Ursula!" Hauser's tone was the one of a man to whom the final outrage has been offered. "Never seen him before! Oh, well, never mind. Let's talk of something else."

Frau Ursula was sorely perplexed. Hauser's friendship and affection which but a minute earlier had lapped her about like a warm breath of air, like the fragrance of violets in a warm room, strengthening and heartening her, now, owing to some occult reason, was in abeyance. A strange fear took hold of her. She did not desire to probe to the root of this change. She desired to restore their former status.

"Erich," she said, appealingly, "I am so terribly afraid. I am afraid this man is going to try and kidnap Guido."

"Why should he wish to do that?"

"You see what value they attach to the child and to his education."

Hauser, instead of replying, strode up and down the room looking distraught and angry.

"Let's talk of something else," he said, suddenly, in a thick, strained voice.

"Erich!" She approached him, and placed her hand upon his sleeve. Instantly he became calmer, and—so it seemed to her, more kindly disposed.

"Erich, I am so sorry this has happened. Be patient with me. I am terribly frightened. The Russians are such daredevils."

"If this particular Russian daredevil comes here again I will thrash him within an inch of his life, and, believe me, my dear, that will settle it."

"I wish I felt as sure as you do that there will be no attempt to steal the boy from me——"

"Of course there won't be," Hauser cried. He was terribly wrought upon. He seemed like a man from whom the last vestige of self-control had suddenly dropped away. "You exaggerate the boy's importance because you love him. I do not blame you for that. Every mother does it. It is nature's way of making sure that the babies will be properly cared for. If Vasalov really thought the boy so important, he would never have deserted you and the child. He is making of the boy's mythical importance a subterfuge to get near you again. But you're my wife. And you

love me. You told me to-day, within the hour, within the minute that you love me. Let him try—just let him try!”

The sensation which swept over Frau Ursula as the full meaning of Hauser's unintentional innuendo, wrung from him by excess of emotion, dawned upon her, can better be imagined than described. For a moment she was completely dazed. Then, when her vision cleared, and she found herself standing in the familiar dining-room, with Hauser at her side, she felt as if she had returned from a long journey through uncharted space.

“You think Guido is my child?” she forced herself to stammer out. The thing seemed so preposterous, so asinine, that she expected a vehement denial from him. But he did not reply. The expression on his face was the expression of a man in extreme pain. “You thought Vasalov was my lover? You thought I had invented Varvara Alexandrovna and Guido von Estritz and the Synthesis—just to save my reputation?”

From a pasty white Hauser's face turned a dull brick-red.

“I didn't want you to know that I suspected the truth,” he said, in a low voice of entreaty. “I understood thoroughly what a horrible thing it was for a woman reared as you had been to find herself in such a predicament. I did not blame you. My word for it. I pitied you immeasurably. I admired you, too, for your cleverness and shrewdness in inventing the story of the Synthesis. Because I did not wish to humiliate or mortify you, I pretended to believe your story. Sometimes, when I realized that the fellow—whoever he was—still possessed your love, I could have committed murder. But I was never angry with you, Ursula, never. All I felt for you was a pity deeper than I can find words to express.”

He had spoken with a noble simplicity, a sort of homely grandeur. Of this Hauser's wife was aware, even while she answered, breathing convulsively:

“And thinking me that sort of a woman you married me? Thinking that of me you accepted money from me? Where did you think the money came from? My lover? Oh! Erich, were you as base as that?”

“Don't!” he cried, pleadingly. “Don't!” He put up his hands as if to ward off a blow.

"Oh," she cried in an agonized voice, "this is all so sordid and so low! To think that less than five minutes ago I clung to you, I kissed the lips that now insult me so grossly."

"Ursula," cried the man, "for heaven's sake, stop. Don't say any more now. You are angry. You'll say things you do not mean."

"I'll say things I do mean. I'll say things I am too kind to say unless anger wrenches them from me. I despise you. I have always despised you. You're a climber, a sordid, mercenary climber. And I hate you. I hate you," she concluded.

She had worked herself into such a state of hysterical irresponsibility that for the moment she actually believed the folly she was uttering. And yet she did not hate Hauser. She had not hated him for months, and she would never hate him again. She had looked too deep into his heart. She had glimpsed there such unbounded kindness and illimitable love for herself that she would have been less than human if she had given him hatred in return. But it is by no means incompatible with woman's psychology to feel love and to feign hatred.

"Oh, no," he said, very quietly, "you do not hate me. You do not even despise me. You know that I have told you the truth just now—that I esteem you as highly as if this thing had never happened—as if Vasalov—and Guido—had never existed."

"You forgive me, I suppose" she demanded, with superb irony.

"Oh, come now," he said, kindly. "I have never, not even in thought, used that expression. And you know it."

"Apparently you still believe that Guido is my child and that consequently, I was a ——." She concluded her sentence with a word that brought the blood to Hauser's cheek. Saintly women, in their handling of vicious affairs often lapse into indecorum of language. It is with them a token of crowning contempt to use no fair and seemly words in speaking of the seamy side of life.

Hauser winced.

"You've said nothing to disprove my suspicion," he reminded her, tolerantly.

"No. Nor shall I lower myself to your level by disproving it, as I could do, if I wished to."

"Ursula!" There was a new note in his voice. Was it hope? Or retaliation? Or rancor? "I have been very patient with you throughout a good many years, and I have been very patient with you now. If you can disprove this—if Guido is not your child and if Vasalov has never been your lover, I think you owe it to me to submit me the proofs."

She flared up anew.

"Proofs!" she cried. "Proofs! Believe what you wish. What you think matters nothing to me. The contempt of the contemptible cannot touch me."

"Have a care!" He was angered at last. "You are my wife. You bear my name. You enjoy my protection. I repeat, I have the right to demand the proofs to which you refer and I do demand them now."

He realized, as soon as he had spoken, that he could not have chosen more unfortunate words. By continued pleading and kindness he might have swayed her, might have touched her heart and forced her to concede the nobility of his conduct in spite of the surface ripples of sordidness and self-interest which he could not gainsay. But he had made the fatal mistake of showing masterfulness at the wrong moment. He had domineered when he should have entreated and argued. He went white with apprehension of what was coming.

"You demand them!" she sneered. She laughed cruelly, hideously. He barely recognized his sweet and gentle Ursula. "You have a right to nothing. You were paid—well paid—for deigning to rehabilitate a fallen woman. Witness your present prosperity! No, Erich, you have a right to nothing excepting to the shekels which your wife's shame has brought you."

Her voice broke into a sob. Hauser stared at her, bewildered, non-plused, perplexed. For a moment he had entertained the tremendous hope that she would clear herself. Now she had thrust him back into utter darkness. The gloom of his uncertainty was more cruel than before. It merged suddenly into the still more sinister gloom of certainty.

She was guilty, of course she was guilty! As if it mat-

tered! It had never really mattered to him, since he loved her with a true and an honest love. Why couldn't she comprehend that? Why were women so unreasonable? Why, being so unreasonable, were men condemned to love these frail and emotionally shifting creatures?

He came to with a start. He was crumpling the newspaper in his hands, rolling it up into an enormous, contorted ball. And he was alone. The door was just closing behind his wife.

CHAPTER VIII

THE proof of her innocence which Frau Ursula had alluded to was a proof so slenderly proportioned that Hauser, more likely, than not, would have rejected it as insufficient. What Frau Ursula had referred to was the daguerreotype of the first Guido given her by Dr. Koenig and to Dr. Koenig's procurable testimony that the founder of the American branch of the von Estritz family had not been a mythical character.

False pride forbade any endeavor at vindication. Her love for Hauser was again overlaid with hatred, strangest platina of all for the gentlest passion that can move the human heart. How can hatred fasten itself to love? Can the paradox be explained by saying that the impurities of love are drawn to the surface where they can do the least harm, corroding and disfiguring only that which is visible to all, and leaving the inner shrine unvexed and intact?

Days of misery followed both for Frau Ursula and for Hauser. Hauser effaced himself as much as possible, eating an early breakfast, which he insisted on preparing himself, as old Kaetchen did not appear before seven, and often returning to his home long after midnight. On Sundays he made much ado over business engagements in the city. There was, as yet, no change in his manner toward his wife and Guido upon the few occasions when he had come in contact with his family.

Frau Ursula lived in hourly terror lest Vasalov reappear on the scene. She feared that Hauser might carry out his threat and, inadvertently, kill the Russian. She feared, almost as much, or more, that Vasalov might make a successful effort to abduct Guido. She did not dare broach either subject to Hauser. And yet she had never longed for his support and guidance as she longed for them in these bitter days. She suffered sudden accesses of softness in the privacy of her own room; then she would hold long imaginary conversations with her husband, gently persuading him to

realize the injustice he had done her. At the end of such an interview she would weep unrestrainedly but silently upon her pillow. The ghostly session over, she lapsed either into diffidence or into hardness, chiefly the latter. She could not forgive Hauser for suspecting her of the unforgivable sin.

Vasalov appeared about ten days later with a very fair, emaciated, gentle-eyed and soft-voiced youth of about three-and-twenty in tow, whom he introduced as Sergius Ivanovich Dobronov.

Young Dobronov conveyed an impression of general grayness which was somewhat disconcerting. His eyes fluctuated between gray and slate, his hair was so very fair as to appear blond or grayish, according to the angle at which the light fell upon it, and his complexion partook of the general color scheme—or lack-of-color scheme—which nature seemed to have mapped out for him. His manners were irreproachable and he spoke German perfectly, very much better than Vasalov.

Frau Ursula eyed him suspiciously. She tried to persuade herself that she thought him capable of any villiany. Assassination might be the least and the sweetest of his evil practices. She remembered reading about the strange religious sects which flourish in Russia, the communicants of which pollute the conception of religion by following obscene and abominable rites ostensibly in its observance. What, after all, did she know of Vasalov? He might be an impostor, although she did not think so. He might be conniving with this man to secure him access to Guido's person for heaven only knows what baleful purposes.

She decided to be so rude to him that he would refuse to teach Guido Russian.

"I suppose Prince Vasalov has initiated you into the complex system with which Guido's education is hedged about."

"*Jawohl, verehrte Frau,*" the young man replied in his almost metallicly clear German.

"There is one thing I want to say to you in the presence of his mother's cousin," she continued. "I have sedulously avoided introducing into his life any influence that would create a strong bias in favor of any theological creed or any political faith. I am equally determined that no influence shall impinge upon his life tending to create a homicidal

mania such as possessed his mother and the Prince and no doubt possesses yourself."

The young man, to Frau Ursula's surprise, instead of being affronted, burst out laughing. It was a frank, honest, wholesome laugh, and from the moment she heard it, Frau Ursula's heart went out to the young fellow.

"I beg your pardon," Dobronov said. "It was very rude, indeed, of me to laugh. But your misconception of my character is so flagrant, *verehrte Frau*." He stopped, smiled broadly and relapsed into silence.

"I will not attempt to defend myself against your charge, Frau Hauser," said Vasalov, good-naturedly. "Were I to do so, Sergius Ivanovich would outrival yourself in condemning the violent measures espoused by Varvara Alexandrovna and myself in our fight for Russian freedom."

"Then——" Partially conciliated, Frau Ursula glanced questioningly at Dobronov. She liked this lad—he was little more—liked him immensely.

"Sergius Ivanovich is a Dukhobor," said Vasalov.

"And what may that be?" she demanded.

But before Vasalov could explain the meaning of the formidable word, Dobronov exclaimed, with great energy:

"I beg your pardon, Dmitri Stepanovich, I am not a Dukhobor."

"You are certainly not behaving like one now," Vasalov rejoined, smiling broadly.

"I beg your pardon," said the pale youth, with sudden meekness. It was Frau Ursula's turn to smile. Apparently Dobronov prefaced every remark with a request for forgiveness. There certainly was nothing formidable about him. She felt entirely reassured.

"And what may a Dukhobor be?" she inquired again.

"I refused to be classified," Dobronov sang out, wildly excited again. "I absolutely refuse to be labeled."

Vasalov smiled subtly.

"The Dukhobors would certainly object—if they ever do so strenuous a thing as that—to having you ranked with them, if you continue in this fashion."

"I beg your pardon," said Dobronov, meek once more. "I am not living up to my principles just now, it is true."

"But what is a Dukhobor?" Frau Ursula inquired for the third time, her interest now thoroughly aroused,

"The Dukhobors are a religious sect of Russia," Vasalov rejoined, "whose chief tenet is the doctrine of non-resistance, a doctrine which our friend Dobronov subscribes to with all his heart. They will suffer imprisonment, stripes and banishment sooner than carry arms or submit to conscription. They never oppose force to force. They bow to cruelty, harshness, persecution, but they do not strike back. They will suffer a thousand deaths sooner than dream of killing anyone. And they carry the principle into every-day life. Thus, for instance, if you were to take it into your head to be rude to Sergius Ivanovich, a possibility which, since you are a woman of breeding, could not arise, he would smile and bow and thank you, but never be rude in return."

Frau Ursula put her tongue against her teeth. Vasalov's adroitness in rebuking her showed him to be more of man of the world than she had suspected. She had been at no pains to disguise the low regard in which she held his morality, perhaps his mentality as well. He had taken these means of correcting her perspective.

"I imagine you are taking too flattering a view of my incapacity for rudeness," she replied. "I am going to ask a question now which may offend you. If so, I beg of you to excuse my rudeness on the ground that I am seriously seeking enlightenment."

Vasalov bowed to indicate that he was at her service.

"You," she began, "are not a Dukhobor, I take it?"

"Hardly," Vasalov replied. "The Dukhobors are Christians. I am an atheist."

Frau Ursula shivered. A self-confessed assassin and atheist! And he smiled and talked and walked and doubtless ate and slept and loved like other men.

"How then can you two, who hold such divergent views, be friends?" she inquired.

"Our views are not as divergent as they seem at first glance," Vasalov replied. "We both believe in the Universal Brotherhood of Man. We differ in the methods we pursue to achieve that Universal Brotherhood."

"Can an atheist believe in the Brotherhood of Man?" she inquired.

"Why not? Ah, I see. You think that a belief in Brotherhood presupposes a belief in Fatherhood. Some

of us go so far as to believe that even the earthly father may dispensed with. Madame, I meant nothing frivolous or light!" Vasalov appended, hastily, on perceiving Frau Ursula's scandalized face. "What I meant was, of course, that there are those who believe that in the simple communistic societies, which would take the place of the present complex state, all children should be reared and educated together, enjoying the same advantages, the same privileges, the same rights irrespective of parenthood. This, we believe, would be the safest guarantee devisable against a renascence of the present corrupt, reprehensible civilization with which the entire world is afflicted to-day."

All this was Greek to Frau Ursula. To deflect the conversation into simpler channels, she inquired:

"Do I understand that the Dukhobors are socialists?"

"Something very much like it," said Vasalov. But Dobronov again became intensely excited.

"I am not a socialist," shouted the apostle of non-resistance. "I refuse to be classified. This mania for labeling human beings as if they were geological specimens is at the root of most of the trouble in the world."

Frau Ursula was struck by this remark. These Russians, although a little unhinged—*ein bisschen uebergeschnappt*—possessed thinking apparatuses not to be despised.

Vasalov smiled indulgently.

"If Sergius Ivanovich did not object to being classified," he said, "I might be tempted to describe him as an anarchist."

"I am an anarchist in a way, of course," grumbled the Condemner of Dissent, "though I hate to be called so. I detest all labels. Labeling human beings as this or that makes them unfree. Immediately a man has proclaimed himself a socialist or an anarchist, he feels himself obligated to maintain the opinions to which he has subscribed in the face of all opposition. If anyone differs with him, the devil of obstinacy is roused in him. He may see that there is truth and soundness of reasoning in what the other chap says, but self-love and vanity silence reason and conscience, and he may find himself defending principles in which he no longer believes simply because he is too proud or too vain to recant."

"There's a good deal of truth in what you say, Prince

Dobronov," said Vasalov. "Do you not think so?" he inquired of Frau Ursula.

"*Prince* Dobronov!" Frau Ursula exclaimed, amazed at the sudden cropping up of the unexpected title. Were all Russians princes or dukes or counts?

"Dmitri Stepanovich, it's too bad of you to give me away like that," wailed the advocate of supine submission. "You know I detest titles. Titles are as bad as labels. They are labels of the most pernicious character, labels that are foisted upon us at birth whether we have earned them or not. Can a man be born a thief? Or a doctor? Or a jurist? I appeal to your common-sense, Madame. Then how can a man be born a prince? It's manifestly absurd. A civilization that decks itself out in such tinsel and paste is a bedizened Jezebel. I will none of it. If men loved one another as He commanded them to do, the civilization reared by the human race would know no restraints excepting those imposed by Christ's will and attained through Him. And if men respected one another's rights, as reason as well as love bids us do, the civilization evolved by the human race would need no restraints at all."

He paused a moment, and then concluded, with impassioned earnestness:

"Some day Holy Russia's message of the Divine Mystery and Presence shall save all the world."

"Some day Holy Russia's message of equality and reason shall make all the world free," said Vasalov.

"You cannot make the world free excepting through love of Christ," said Dobronov, gently.

"You cannot make the world free if you bind it up in all the unhealthy and crippling dogmas of the church," said Vasalov.

"How dare you call any church found on Christ's words unhealthy and crippling?" shouted the advocate of universal peace. "How dare you, Prince Vasalov?"

Vasalov flushed angrily, and it became evident to Frau Ursula that Dobronov had given Vasalov his title as a token of crowning disdain, just as Vasalov, probably, had given Dobronos his title a little earlier for the same reason. She suppressed a smile. These Russians were like children—as direct, as quarrelsome and as sincere.

"I call every dogma, and not only every dogma, but

every religion unhealthy, because the object in every instance is to betray man into an inglorious acquiescence in his earthly fate by holding out glowing rewards in the hereafter."

"We must rise superior to our earthly fate," Dobronov said, stoutly. "If our earthly state had power to chafe the spirit, the spirit is weak and needs hardening. What does dogma or doctrine matter? My sole doctrine is to obey Christ implicitly. And it was He who commanded and practiced poverty, and non-resistance. Hence my religion is the only true religion."

"Ah," cried Vasalov, "they all say that."

Frau Ursula thought it time to put an end to this futile argumentation.

"Prince Dobronov," she began, but was silenced by a roar of indignation from the universal pacifist.

"Madame," he shouted, "what have I done to deserve this insult from you? From *you*?"

"What insult?" stammered Frau Ursula, half-aware wherein she had blundered.

"To give me my title! To call me 'Prince.'"

"But what else am I to call you?" she demanded, boldly.

"Sergius Ivanovich," he replied, "of course."

"I am afraid I cannot remember all that," she said, petulantly. And now, strange to say, that she had spoken to him without the restraint customary among well-bred strangers, she felt as if they were very old friends. She found that she liked this pale, impetuous, gray lad, whose fiery spirit was at such variance with the principles which he professed.

"Then call me plain Dobronov. No, stop! That's too much like the Intelligentsia. Call me plain Sergius."

Frau Ursula was a little taken aback by this suggested familiarity.

"Do, please," said Dobronov, smiling at her so charmingly that she consented forthwith.

"Very well," she said, "but in presenting you to others, I must call you either Prince or Mr. Dobronov."

"Why must you?" demanded the scorner of titles.

"If I had known you were a prince, I should have given you your title at once," she said, smiling a little fatuously.

"After all, there is convention."

"Convention!" exclaimed Dobronov.

"I thought, of course, you knew," said Vasalov, addressing Frau Ursula. "The Vasalovs are beggars and upstarts compared to the Dobronovs. Our family rose to prominence only in the seventeenth century under Philaret, the father of Peter the Great, the Romanov to whom our ancestor was related. But the Dobronovs trace their descent back to the time of the Muscovite dynasty—to one of the boyars who helped end Tartar oppression."

Dobronov scowled horribly at this recital of his family's antiquity and grandeur. Vasalov, ignoring the danger signal, continued:

"As to worldly goods, Dobronov's grandfather, before the proclamation was issued abolishing serfs, owned something like fifteen hundred souls."

Dobronov flared up like a volcano.

"Why speak of these shameful things!" he cried. "I have lain awake nights lamenting the sinfulness of my long line of forebears who hopelessly polluted their souls by owning serfs. Heaven knows, those same sin-laden souls by this time may be suffering painful expiation by habitation in the bodies of monkeys, chicken or swine. Do not laugh, Dmitri Stepanovich. I assure you, when I tread on a caterpillar, or scotch a snake, or when I eat bacon or duck, I tremble with dread lest I am hurting or eating"—he shuddered—"one of my ancestors."

Frau Ursula was transfixed with surprise.

"You do not seriously believe in the transmigration of souls," she demanded, "do you?"

"Of course, I do," said Dobronov, with some show of impatience. "What else should I believe?"

"It seems to me," said Vasalov, "that you are taking a contorted view of the matter. "If your forebears laid up guilt in owning serfs, and the serfs acquired merit through offering no resistance in their own behalf, then, surely, part of your forefathers' sins must be remitted them because they were the humble instruments of Providence in allowing their bondsmen to lay up treasure in heaven."

Dobronov grew a shade paler.

"What an idea!" he exclaimed. "What dreadful things you do think of, Dmitri Stepanovich. I believe there is something in it, though. What made you put such a notion

in my head? Still another idea to fit in with my beliefs. Some day my poor mind will succumb to the strain of this continual conflict of ideas."

Frau Ursula had not yet entirely recovered from her surprise in Dobronov's amazing belief in transmigration.

With as little ceremony as Vasalov or Dobronov observed, she asked, abruptly:

"But how can you be a Christian, Sergius, if you really believe in the old religion of Egypt?"

Dobronov's face glowed with pleasure because Frau Ursula had addressed him by his first name. He was, she saw, as unsophisticated as a child. Then, with a quiet intentness which contrasted favorably with the febrile excitement which had marked his behavior to Vasalov throughout, he said:

"There are a great number of religious sects in Russia which are justified in describing themselves as Christians, because they unqualifiedly accept the teachings of Christ as set forth in the New Testament, deriving guidance for their conduct from that source and that only. Furthermore, they refuse to worship ikons, will not tolerate Church Slavonic in their divine services, conducting them instead in the vernacular, and, in brief, repudiate the vast web of falsehood, of ridiculous doctrine, of corruption, of license which accumulates about every church maintaining a highly specialized sacerdotal caste. These various sects believe that dogma has very little to do with salvation, and concentrate rather in following the precepts of clean living enunciated by Jesus. But a religious belief, quite apart from the ethics of religion, is indigenous to the primitive human heart, and the Russians are still a primitive people. Hence they insist on classifying themselves, driven thereto probably by an animal instinct for companionship quite as much as by the religious instinct. Indeed, there are times when the two instincts seem to me identical."

"Well," Vasalov exclaimed, "I confess, I did not expect such a keen and searching analysis of the religious psychology from a religious enthusiast like yourself."

The flush of anger leaped to Dobronov's cheek. Vasalov, quiet, disdainful, his restraint slightly tinged with malice, seemed to act like an irritant upon the younger man's nerves whenever he chose to address him.

"Because you are a materialist and an atheist, Dmitri Stepanovich, you cannot perceive the difference between an ethical follower of Christ, like myself, and religious bigots who pin their faith in salvation upon some silly dogma of their own fabrication.

"It is because I am an ethical follower of Christ," he continued, with gathering emphasis, "and believe that right living is everything and dogma of not the least consequence in this world or the next, that I refuse resolutely to allow myself to be classified. I do not even care to be identified with the Dukhobors who, in my estimation, more than any other religious body, embody divine truth in their teachings."

"You are a Dukhobor, even if you deny it," said Vasalov.

Dobronov made a horrible grimace, but did not reply. With a shrug of the shoulder he continued his elucidation, pointedly addressing Frau Ursula.

"Being in the flesh, I am only human, and being human I cannot help formulating some beliefs, nor can I help examining every new phase of religious thought or religion that comes my way. Many strange religions have left their impress on the Russian character by infiltration from other races and other lands. I could name you a parallel religion for every belief I hold. That does not deter me from holding it. My beliefs—and for a Christian they will seem odd beliefs to a German Lutheran like yourself—may have come to me by seepage; on the other hand, they may have sprung spontaneously out of my own spiritual soil. I do not know which. And I do not care."

"I thought you were going to tell Frau Hauser just what you do believe," Vasalov suggested.

"Yes, yes. That is so. *Verehrte Frau*, I am a Dukhobor in that I accept Christ's precept of non-resistance. I am a Molokan in that I reverence the Bible. I am a Bezpopovtoky in that I do not believe in a priesthood of any sort; I am a Bieguny in that I believe the safest guaranty for not transgressing against the law of poverty practiced and taught by Christ is to be found in a nomadic life; I am a Skoptsky, in that I believe the perfect man should be a eunuch for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, although, contrary to the Skopskys, I believe that this perfection must be attained by purely spiritual means, by a

spiritual conquest of the flesh. And lastly, I am a Kinytsky in that I believe in the transmigration of the soul after death; but I abhor the religious orgies practiced by this sect. So you see the dilemma I am in. One doctrine of one religion suits me, other doctrines of other religions appeal to me. That is one reason why I refuse to label myself. Also I am an individualist. I am entirely free from the herding instinct. What I will come to in the future I cannot, of course, say. One reason for my coming to America was the desire to learn more of the beliefs of your numerous Protestant sects."

Frau Ursula had listened with growing bewilderment. Surely, never was there so curious a confession of faith. It seemed to her that a man who, as far as she could gather, seemed to be the direct antithesis of Vasalov in thought and habit of life—in spite of the single point upon which they averred that they agreed—would have been the very last person whom Vasalov would have wished to select as a tutor for Guido. She was greatly disturbed. Much as she disliked Vasalov and mistrusted him, she was loth to suspect Dobronov of duplicity. His evident sincerity, the childlike simplicity with which he spread out his spiritual beliefs and his mentality for her inspection, had won her liking and her esteem.

Vasalov, that sinister genius—for so she conceived him—must have read something of her misgivings in her face.

"I see you are wondering why I selected Sergius Ivanovich as a tutor for Guido," he said, a slightly contemptuous smile twitching at the corners of his mouth. "I will tell you my reasons. I selected him for the high honor of tutoring the lad in whom our greatest hopes center because in spite of Dobronov's youth he represents Russian thought in its overpowering variety more than any man I know. There is no phase of Russian life—from the Intelligentsia to the Imperial Ballet—with which he is not conversant. He is a veritable magnet for current thought. No-Bias is safe in his hands, because Sergius Ivanovich changes his ideas and beliefs more frequently than many Russians change their clothes. He never retains any one idea long enough to become saturated with it, or to convince anyone else of its correctness. I myself have too narrow, too restricted a view, as the specialist in any one

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field must necessarily have. But Varvara Alexandrovna desired the most ingrainedly Russian Russian available to instruct her son. You behold him in Sergius Ivanovich. He is not merely the most Russian Russian I know, he not merely reflects Russian thought with admirable completeness and admirable complexity; he is Russia itself, Russia in miniature."

Dobronov had listened with the utmost composure to this analysis of his spiritual self. He did not seem to resent it. Speaking with calm aloofness, he remarked:

"I don't think you do me justice, Dmitri Stepanovich, in speaking of me as a magnet of ideas. The freakish things attracted by a magnet pile up confusedly all over its surface. But my ideas are in orderly arrangement. My mind is a titanic kaleidoscope, in which the many-pointed star which carries out the kaleidoscope's principal design indicates my major beliefs, all my minor thoughts and emotions being arranged so as to fill in the intervening themes. They intersect, intermingle, interlace. I admit that I change my beliefs and doctrines very frequently. What does it matter? They are really of no particular consequence. All excepting the belief in non-resistance. To that I adhere rigidly, and will adhere so long as there is life in my body."

"From the stress you lay upon the Russian element in Guido's education," said Frau Ursula, addressing Vasalov, "one would think the Synthesis had the salvation of Russia particularly in view. But that isn't so. The Synthesis concerns the world. And Guido is a German-American quite as much as a Russo-American."

"A German-American—a German!" shouted Dobronov. "Do not speak of that infamous race."

"The hypocrite among peoples," Vasalov threw in.

"The bully among nations," said Dobronov.

"The blond beast of the world!" Vasalov contributed. His deep mellow baritone made the lines ring like the chant of a priest.

"Vainglorious, conceited materialists," Dobronov continued. "Oppressors of the poor and weak. Cringing toadies to the powerful."

"Apparently, gentlemen," Frau Ursula contrived to interpose at this point, "in your estimation, the Universal

Brotherhood of man does not embrace the German race. Antipathy, I perceive, has as great a power to unite you as predilection."

Dobronov hung his head, like a reproved child, and even Vasalov seemed a trifle abashed.

"The country which you are abusing is the country in which I was born," Frau Ursula continued, pleasantly. "Of course, as an American citizen it matters little to me so long as your diatribes confine themselves to the country. But when you extend them to embrace the entire race of Germans, I feel myself included, for, as you pointed out to me on a previous occasion, Prince Vasalov, we can change our political allegiance but not our race."

Dobronov seemed crushed—as much by the new perspective presented by Frau Ursula as by pain at having given his hostess offense.

"What things people do say," he exclaimed. "Ah, to escape from this perpetual conflict of ideas!"

Vasalov waited with an exaggerated patience for Dobronov to finish. Then, with his usual urbanity, he said:

"*Verehrte Frau*, I humbly beg your pardon. We have both been unforgivably rude. I did not think of you as a German. From what you said the other day I thought that you had completely identified yourself with America."

Before Frau Ursula could reply, Dobronov sprang from his chair spasmodically.

"*Chère madame*," he cried, "will you forgive me if I leave on the instant?" He had, it seems, an engagement to speak at a dinner given by a Society for Advanced Thinking. Frau Ursula smilingly bade him wave ceremony. He made his adieus, kissing her hand as he bade her good-bye, an action for which he apologized immediately, explaining that in his youth the observances of polite society had been so rammed into him that in moments of abstraction he reverted to them although they were expressly prohibited both by his religious and his political views.

Then he ran off as joyously as a boy to garner in more ideas for his mental kaleidoscope.

A dullness seemed to have fallen upon the room now that Dobronov's mercurial presence was removed. Neither Vasalov nor Frau Ursula felt any inclination to prolong the conversation.

Vasalov requested his hostess to supply Guido with some plausible reason for the study of Russian. She suggested that he place at her disposal one or two Russian books. He had a small volume of verse in his pocket and handed it to her. Then he left her, assuring her, his half-amused, half-malicious smile still faintly perceptible, that she would not be troubled by himself overmuch in future.

On the whole Frau Ursula felt that she had reason to congratulate herself that the Vasalov episode had moved along such equable lines. The devastating blow it had dealt her own happiness she tried not to think about. Blind fury possessed her at times at thought of Hauser's suspicion. She forced her thoughts to flow as much as possible in other channels.

True to her promise she laid the Russian book which Vasalov had placed in her hands on the parlor table, certain that her book-worm would rise to the bait. The expected happened. Guido discovered the book one evening, and, always hungry for printed matter, seized avidly upon the volume with the unaccustomed characters. He demanded to be told what language it might be that employed signs so confusing and arbitrary. Chinese, mayhap?

"Russian," said Frau Ursula.

"Russian? Then Prince Vasalov was here to-day?"

"No—day before yesterday."

"While I was out?"

"While you were out."

"*Mutterchen*, are there many books printed in Russian?"

"Yes."

"Have they any great writers, like Schiller and Goethe?"

"Some critics consider the Russian novelists the greatest in the world."

"Mother, I should love to study Russian."

"You may, if you wish."

The curriculum of studies allowed Guido, owing to the ever-present fear that he would outdo his meager strength, had been deleted as much as possible. Frau Ursula had, as it were, weeded the necessities of learning from the luxuries. Arithmetic was comprised in the schedule, and so were History and Geography. But Spelling, Reading, Music, Drawing and Botany were barred. Thus his work had been frugally pared down to embrace only the most

needful. Guido, alert and keen-witted though he was, perceived nothing strange in the fact that he was not permitted to study a language as popular as French, while encouraged in his desire to master so unusual a tongue as Russian.

And so Russian was added to Guido's linguistic tribulations. He was enchanted with Dobronov, and Dobronov was equally charmed with the child. It was evident from the first that they were going to be excellent friends, and once more Frau Ursula was filled with alarm.

Poor Frau Ursula! In spite of her very decided liking for Dobronov, all her fears and all her qualms of conscience were intermittently recurrent. She could not have reproached herself more bitterly if she had apprenticed Guido to Fagan himself.

Dobronov, in spite of his seeming honesty and transparent candor might, just possibly might, be a blind purposely designed and engineered by the malignant Vasalov. If so, Frau Ursula was bound to admit, Dobronov was an actor of supreme genius. Sometimes she sat in the room while the Russian lesson was proceeding; sometimes she subjected Guido to a grilling third degree after the lesson was over. Certainly nothing took place during these lessons which might remotely be construed as inciting Guido to homicidal mania. A few times, on evenings when she knew that her husband would not be at home, Frau Ursula invited Dobronov to stay for tea. If Frau Ursula had expected to glean some insight into the nefarious Vasalov methods or nefarious Vasalov intentions from Dobronov, she was doomed to disappointment. Dobronov touched on nothing more heinous than his contemplated conversion to the Baptist faith. His aversion for being labeled seemed to be undergoing disintegration. He was very enthusiastic about the Baptists and was receiving instruction in their beliefs. Baptism of adults by immersion struck him as the most commendably exculpatory rite he had yet heard of. He burned with ardor to have it performed upon himself, but some instinct made him insist upon preliminary instruction. He trembled with apprehension lest he stumble upon some obstacle. For the first time in his life he was not only willing but eager to be classified and labeled.

And yet, in spite of Dobronov's reassuring manner and speech, Frau Ursula's uneasiness continued. She had long talks with Dr. Koenig, and thanked heaven for the boon of the old physician's friendship. To Mrs. Thornton also Frau Ursula unbosomed herself. Mrs. Thornton was an uncompromising optimist and chid Frau Ursula gently for her lack of faith in Dobronov. She, too, had taken Sergius Ivanovich to her heart, and his efforts at conversation with her in English were more successful than Frau Ursula had supposed possible.

The Experiment Mrs. Thornton thought extraordinary and delightful. She seemed to look upon it as a sort of sublimated joke. Frau Ursula was a little hurt by this attitude. In Frau Ursula's eyes Mrs. Thornton's unquenchable optimism sometimes savored of levity. It was, in fact, the only thing about Mrs. Thornton which Frau Ursula did not quite like. Because Mrs. Thornton was so charming and lovable, Frau Ursula chose to overlook her airy sprightliness in disposing of the most serious topics in life, taking considerable credit to herself for being thus broad-gauged, and never suspecting that what she considered a failing in the pretty little widow was in truth one of her finest attributes.

But of the matter which was the source of a continual, grueling agitation, she could speak neither to Mrs. Thornton nor to the kind old physician. Her break with Hauser preyed upon her mind. In vain she tried to wrap herself in proud disdain, in vain tried to tell herself that he was as much of a clinging vulgarian, *Streber*, opportunist, time-server and plebeian as he had ever been. He was so impossible that mere contact with him spelled degradation. If that were not so, how had she happened to forget her dignity so far as to say the things to him which undeniably she had said? She knew that she had acted very badly, and her anger and disgust with herself increased her anger and disgust with him who had evoked these sentiments of self-depreciation.

She still had her soft moments, but she tried to harden herself against them. There was no excuse possible for considering her one of the unspeakable sisterhood. The recollection of that burned like caustic. Like many another virtuous woman, Frau Ursula all-unconsciously, whenever

occasion offered, asserted her virtue by viciously proclaiming her contempt for those of her sex who had strayed from the narrow path. She deliberately blinded herself to the recurrence of the salad-day disease from which she was suffering. Perhaps she really was blind to it. But a patient down with bronchial pneumonia suffers quite as much or more if in ignorance of the nature of the disease than if it has been properly diagnosed.

Matters came to a head between herself and Hauser when one day he came home shortly after dinner with a roll of blue prints under his arm. He seemed pleasantly excited, and in addressing his wife gave no sign that all was not well between them.

"I have the architect's plans here for the new house," he said. "At my request he has made rough sketches and plans for four different styles. If none of these I have here suit you, I told him he would have to come here some day and have a talk with you so that you would be sure to get just the sort of house you have in mind."

Frau Ursula resented strongly that Hauser should take it for granted that she would allow herself to be obligated to him to such an extent. After what had happened between them, she considered it a piece of audacity on his part to broach the subject of the new house at all. The still inner voice which is present in every human soul whispered to her that he was striving desperately to place himself on the same footing with her as before, that he was clumsy, perhaps, in his choice of an avenue of approach, but that his intentions were good.

But she would not hearken to the small still voice. She said coldly:

"I have no sort of house in mind at all."

"Oh, come now, surely you must have," Hauser said, persuasively. "Even I, who am not particularly imaginative, have an ideal of pretty nearly everything under the sun from a horse to a house."

"Supposing, then, you suit yourself as to the house," Frau Ursula said, coldly.

"I'd like to suit you, instead," said the man, pleadingly. "I'm sure your taste is better than mine and besides—perhaps I should have put that reason first—I want so much that you should be thoroughly pleased. When you have

time, please, Ursula, look over these blue prints. Would you like me to explain them to you?"

"I would not," said Frau Ursula.

Probably half of the quarrels in the world are caused by the inability of one person to get the other person's viewpoint. Hauser could not—honestly could not—comprehend why his wife should continue to show such an implacable resentment because he had clumsily referred to her early indiscretion. He had not animadverted, he had merely adverted. In marrying her, had he not wiped that indiscretion off the slate? His was the continental code of ethics, and, for that matter, the world over it is considered that the man who forgives his wife a pre-marital imprudence is doing rather a fine thing. So he could not comprehend why she was so very angry. If, as she claimed, Guido was not her child and Vasalov's, why had she withheld the proofs of which she spoke? She was not a hysterical woman, not one of your unwholesome, capricious creatures who take pride in being nervous wrecks at thirty. She was clean, and well-poised and as honest as the day. He could, therefore, only conclude that his supposition was entirely correct, and that Guido was her child. Why, then, this show of continued contempt for himself?

Frau Ursula on the other hand dwelt only on his ill opinion of her in one particular, not on the general high esteem in which she knew very well that he held her. Nothing less than a frank apology and downright repudiation of his apocalyptic beliefs would satisfy her; and even these, spontaneously rendered, would not erase her anger and dismay completely. It would take years to abrade those emotions.

Both Hauser and Frau Ursula, like the majority of their sisters and brothers, had a fair modicum of self love and vanity, which they dignified by the pretty name of self-respect.

This sort of conversation, conciliatory and ingratiating on his side, resistive and disagreeable on hers, continued a little longer. She would not look at the blue prints; she would express no preference for one style of architecture over another; she would not decide on the site; she wasn't the least bit interested; she resolutely refused to take cog-

nizance of the fact that her husband was trying with all his might and main to make up.

Finally he lost his patience.

"Very well," he said, "if you won't be friends, you won't."

After that he went back to the manner which had so cowed Guido and hurt her during the bitter months which had preceded the day that had begun so auspiciously only to end in complete disaster. He came home for meals, hung about the house after hours, was everywhere and nowhere and was always distinctly and deliberately unpleasant, ironic, mocking and brutal.

Guido, who was getting stronger every day, took all his meals at the table now. Not a meal passed without some outburst on Hauser's part.

"What, the heir-apparent is not eating lamb-stew but has a lamb-chop instead!" he exclaimed one day. "Why a lamb-chop? Why not a quail on toast, or a frog's leg, or goose's liver? I am afraid the prince is not being treated well. Madame, I must insist that royalty, when under my roof, receives the proper service."

"Why do you call me a prince, father?" the boy inquired. "We have no royal blood. Prince Vasalov has, though. He is distantly related to the Czar."

"If Vasalov is related to the Czar so are you; if Vasalov has the title of prince so should you have it," said Hauser, with horrible appropriateness.

"Erich!" Frau Ursula cried imploringly. She was white with terror and rage.

"Well, my dear, what is it? What did you wish to say? Nothing? Just called out my name for the joy of the thing? There's a loving wife for you; eh, Guido?"

"My mother is the sweetest mother in the world," the boy replied, a weepy quaver in his voice.

"Of course! But I was speaking of wives, not of mothers. Sweet wives are not necessarily good mothers, sweet mothers not necessarily good wives. Women, my lad, have a great knack of—what is it, my dear? The boy is too young for instruction of this sort? Why, so he is, of course. I wonder what I was thinking of."

"I don't like you to make my mother ridiculous," said Guido, stoutly.

"Hush, Guido," said Frau Ursula, in anguish.

"Why 'hush,' Ursula? The boy's remarks are illuminating. He is something above you and me, I've been given to understand. Why? Because he's so delicate, of course, and has such a brilliant mind."

A flush of anger spotted the boy's pale cheeks. The invisible lash which for a little time had ceased cruelly to exercise itself upon him, was again at work, falling everywhere. He could not see it, or smell it, or hear it or touch it. Neither could he escape it. But he could feel it most abundantly.

How he hated his father!

"I don't care if you make fun of me," he said, his heart pounding heavily against his ribs. "But I won't have my mother ridiculed!"

"Guido, be silent," said Frau Ursula.

Hauser laughed. It was a low, cruel laugh and the woman's blood ran cold with apprehension. What more was to come?

"Let the boy talk," said Hauser. "Here's a gracious young prince willing himself to play the role of court fool, but unwilling to have a breath of ridicule or reproach accrue to his mother."

"Oh, Hauser," almost sobbed Frau Ursula, and Mrs. Thornton bent eyes strangely fearful for a confirmed optimist upon the master of the house. Guido glared sullenly across the table at the man whom he called "father."

"Well, my lad, has your tongue given out?" Hauser inquired in his mock-sollicitous way.

"I hate you," said Guido, unexpectedly. "I *hate* you. I *HATE* you."

Hauser laughed offensively, odiously.

"The trouble with you, my boy," he sneered, "is described admirably by an old proverb. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' You need a good thrashing, my lad."

Mrs. Thornton and Frau Ursula exchanged terrified looks, and then turned eyes of anger and indignation upon Hauser.

"I'm a brute, of course." He smiled comprehensively, so as to include both his wife and Mrs. Thornton in the grimace. Then, addressing Guido, he continued, "A sore back is a splendid thing to have, my lad. Don't stop culti-

vating it. Why, I suppose you'd faint with fright at sight of a whip?"

There fell an ominous pause. Then the unexpected happened. Guido vaulted from his chair and sprang to Hauser's side.

"I'm not a coward," he cried, "and I won't let you call me one. You can beat me all you like, you big bully, but you shan't call me a coward!"

Hauser did not reply. There was upon his face a terrible leer. Frau Ursula's feelings for him were at the moment compact of hatred. It seemed impossible that the man who could be so gentle and thoughtful as she had seen him in the past, could, at will, turn himself into a fiend incarnate.

"Well," the boy cried again, "why don't you beat me?"

"Perhaps, perhaps I will!"

Frau Ursula sprang from her chair, but before she could reach Guido, Mrs. Thornton, who was nearer to him, had grasped the boy about the waist and was dragging him toward her. Guido began struggling, clawing desperately at the air in a vain endeavor to seize Hauser, and crying out excitedly again and again that he was not a coward and did not fear the whip. For the longest time the combined efforts of Frau Ursula and Mrs. Thornton failed to quell the boy's hysterical outbreak.

Hauser's face underwent a subtle change. The muscles of his jowl and mouth seemed to working painfully in adjusting themselves to this new expression. Almost it seemed from his look as if he were sorry for the commotion of which he was the inexcusable cause.

"Don't be foolish, Guido," he said shortly, but not unkindly. "Can't you take a joke? Even if you were strong like other boys, I would not chastise you, as I threatened to do just now in fun, because both your mother and myself disapprove of corporal punishment."

He rose abruptly from the table and as abruptly left the room. It was, under the circumstances, the best thing he could do.

Guido was quite ill for several days following the un-beautiful scene, and this gave his mother the needful excuse for again having his meals served in his room, a

measure which she was determined to adhere to indefinitely in order to avoid friction in the future.

Hauser, when incidentally apprized of the change, which Frau Ursula assured him she was inaugurating for his sake, said, ironically:

"Quite sure it isn't for Guido's sake? Well, I don't blame you. And I'm quite sure he is as glad to be rid of me as I am to be rid of him!"

Frau Ursula took renewed counsel with herself. Again she contemplated leaving Hauser. After all, she was not chained to him. But the sinister specter which Vasalov had raised shattered her quasi-resolution. She could not rid herself of the unreasoning and unreasonable fear that Dmitri Stepanovich might yet attempt to kidnap Guido, and in spite of Hauser's brutality to the boy she was filled with an unshakable faith that he would not fail her if she ever found herself in dire straits.

Nor was that all. Circumstances arise in life when, in facing motives, the honesty of the most honest becomes impaired. Frau Ursula was not as coldly calculating as she would have had herself believe. She regarded Hauser not wholly from the utilitarian view-point, although, at this period, she would have violently repudiated any statement to this effect. Had she not every reason to hate and to despise him? His asinine and insulting suspicion of herself? His treatment of Guido? Yet, when the last is said the fact remains that she trusted him implicitly as she trusted no one else. She had married him because she believed that after night-fall, Indians ran around the streets of American towns scalping pedestrians and raiding houses. And she remained married to him because she feared that Vasalov would spirit away her boy.

She was unaware that in trusting him as she did she was paying him the highest compliment which a woman can pay a man.

She was a well-balanced, wholesome, throbbingly alive woman. To such as she the unfortunate termination of any affair is unthinkable. Subconsciously this had much to do with the fact that she remained under Hauser's roof.

It is, perhaps, this aversion for an unhappy ending that makes men and women look beyond the grave and establish immortality as the sole rational solution of all the disharmonious and frayed ends which make up earthly existence.

CHAPTER IX

GUIDO'S indisposition was not sloughed off as rapidly as Frau Ursula had hoped. She told him of her decision that he should henceforth eat his meals in the privacy of his own room, with either herself or Mrs. Thornton at his side to entertain him and wait upon him. Her communication did not have the expected effect. The child languished; desired to lie abed until noon; barely touched his food and, what alarmed Frau Ursula most of all, barely glanced at a book.

A tremendous resolution was hardening in him, if she had only known it. He had lain awake the better part of the night following his violent outbreak against his "father." At other times insomnia caused him to appeal for relief to his mother. Not so that night. He welcomed his sleeplessness because it enabled him to think out the matter he had in hand, without suffering the inevitable interruptions of daytime. At first the hatred of his father, which hammered in temple and pulse and heart, inhibited thought. As he became calmer, he began to think around and about the subject. Several points stood out. One was that it was base to accept shelter and food from a man whom he hated as bitterly and despised as thoroughly as he hated and despised his father. The second point was that there must be some avenue of escape from the insufferable situation. Other little boys he had read of had run away from home for smaller provocation. Some had prospered amazingly. But he lacked even the frail strength of a Dick Whittington. For him, then, there was open only one avenue of escape—death.

Some philosopher has pointed out that the would-be suicide is in reality not a misanthrope but a person a-hunger and a-thirst for a wider scope of life than lies within his reach. Our unfortunate little hero exemplified this contention. The tears coursed silently but abundantly down

his cheeks during that bitter all-night vigil, as he reflected that the broad highway of life was not for him.

The thought of suicide was repulsive to him in the extreme, not because it envisaged extinction, of which he had only the feeblest of notions, but because it involved a considerable expenditure of initiative and violence. The lad's abnormal condition of living had inhibited in him to a great extent the impulse of natural boyhood toward unthinking, subconscious activity. He was almost entirely deficient in those healthy animal reflexes in which a normal childhood abounds. His over-stimulated brain bore the brunt of this unnatural condition. It trespassed into by-paths of whose very existence childhood should be ignorant.

He had read somewhere that the Hindus possess the questionable art of extinguishing life by the simple expedient of holding their breath. He decided to try this experiment at once. Eons seemed to elapse while his respiratory organs remained in a state of voluntary paralysis without causing him any physical discomfort. He grew hot with fright. He almost regretted having embarked summarily upon this great adventure. Physical discomfort began and put an end to these cogitations. A strange fullness became noticable in pharynx and throat and ears. This fullness presently expanded, encroaching upon chest and heart. It grew, waxed, throve, extending itself to ears, eyes, abdomen. It reached out for his limbs. It became insufferable—and then with an expectant sob the unholy spell was broken, and without any conscious effort on his own part the blessed air again filled nose and throat and lungs.

He was, truth to tell, enormously relieved to find himself still alive. To die so quickly, so unceremoniously, was to curtail the drama of life unduly. He desired a slowly descending curtain. He was quite certain that his decision to throw away the boon of life was the only means within his power to end his dependence upon his father for food and drink. He was quite certain that his decision was irrevocable. But he wished to procrastinate. His zest in the adventure of life was so keen that he desired to enjoy even the savor of oncoming death.

A marvelous thought came to him. He would abstain

from food, eating only a little at each meal, so as to avoid arousing suspicion. Also it would be necessary to leave some paper—some document—making it plain to his mother why he had done the thing he contemplated doing. He cast about for a suitable form. He hit upon it quickly. He would model his Declaration of Death upon the Declaration of Independence. He immediately began exercising his faculties upon the phraseology which he would employ. The joy of the artistic paraphraser was upon him, tranquilizing and soothing him. And in the midst of his silent rhetoric he fell asleep.

To carry out his plan was not easy. His mother's and Mrs. Thornton's vigilance were incessant. He was forced to make elaborate excuses and pleas at each meal to explain the sudden cessation of his appetite, which had been remarkably good for months. The two women finally concluded that something had disagreed with him. A sardine, partaken of a week ago, was fastened upon as the origin of the trouble, and the specific of childhood was administered. The unfortunate child in consequence endured tortures, for the vile medicine increased the gripings of his hunger.

But his will-power held. His appetite remaining in abeyance, Dr. Koenig was summoned and prescribed a tonic, warranted to improve the appetite, which contained quinine and Calasaya bark. He suggested that dainties be prepared to tempt Guido. Accordingly Frau Ursula baked him a chocolate layer cake, of which he was particularly fond. But his will-power, or obstinacy, was equal to the situation. He refused to eat the generous slice of deliciously smelling cake which his mother brought him. She did not remove it, but placed it on a small table within reach. He desired ardently that she would remove it, but he lacked the impudence to pretend that the delicious morsel revolted him, and he could think of no other reason for asking that the cake be taken away. So he resigned himself to bear this additional torture. The appetite-creating medicine arrived, and he had to swallow a huge dose of that, and his appetite and his sufferings throve accordingly. But he would not allow himself to be deflected from the path which he had mapped out for himself. He was the champion of a principle and he would adhere to it.

By the end of that afternoon he was in acute torment.

The layer-cake, in all its tempting exquisiteness, remained where he could and must see it. He was on the rack. Literally, not figuratively, his mouth watered so plentifully that he was forced to swallow continuously, and the ptyalin, in lieu of normal food, seemed to be exercising its digestive arts upon his stomach. He could not read. He could not knit. He could not play solitaire. He could not talk to his mother. He could not even play the dictionary game.

Once or twice he reached out his hand toward the cake merely to enjoy a closer view of its beauty, so he told himself. But he withdrew his hand every time without touching the plate. He knew that he was cheating himself. He knew that if he touched the plate he would succumb to the charms of the cake and that he would eat not only the cake but the delicious luncheon which his mother had set before him, and the most tempting dishes of which had also been left on his bureau.

He suffered profoundly. He had endured much in the eleven years of his life, but all the other miseries of his childhood, cauterization of the back, the discomfort and pain following an operation, the probing for pus with the cruel little syringe that worked like a tiny suction pump, paled into insignificance before the self-inflicted immolation of this day. The physical and mental anguish of it lived with him all through life with a harsh, unrelenting vividness which nothing could extinguish or dim.

When his mother brought his supper he made as if to eat a little, this being part of his program. But a curious thing happened. The first mouthful nauseated him completely. All desire for food left him. He even loathed it. A complete revulsion had set in.

"I cannot eat, *Mutterchen*, I really cannot."

There was no mistaking the genuineness of his words. His mother, with a smothered sigh, removed the tray, her anxiety increased a hundredfold.

Guido felt so light-headed and faint that he was sure he was going to die at once. He became frightened. He had done all in his power to invoke the end which he now believed imminent, and yet—so tremendous is the love of life which dwells in all of us—he was plunged into cold terror. He did not want to die, he found. Most passionately he

did not want to die. He wanted to live. All the feeble strength in his blood called out for life and activity.

For the first time since reaching the great decision he began to temporize. Was a compromise not possible? After all, was it not perhaps merely the duty of his father to support him while he was a minor? That seemed to be the custom everywhere. When he was older—just a little older—he would do something wonderful, something startling. He would write a book which would pour wealth unimaginable into his lap. Then we would be able to repay his father. He would prove himself a profitable investment.

What to write? Something like Schiller's *Don Carlos*. No, he was an American, not a German. Something like the novels of Dickens, perhaps, which Mrs. Thornton, like the unforgettable Hugh Hastings, was forever reading. Or that greater novelist whom his mother was so fond of—Thackeray. Finally, however, he rejected these minor celebrities and fastened upon Milton. He would do something really big—something like *Paradise Lost*. It did not trouble him that, at present, he was not even able to read that marvelous epic comprehendingly. He intended writing its counterpart—when a little older. And he was sweetly oblivious of the cogent fact that golden shekels are earned by popular, not by great literary productions.

His mother, meanwhile, more alarmed than she had been in a long time, had telephoned Dr. Koenig, asking him to come at once.

The old physician did not examine Guido that evening, as Frau Ursula had hoped he would do. He contented himself with sitting at the boy's bedside, and chatting with him. In the hall, to which he motioned Frau Ursula before leaving, because Guido could not hear what was passing there, he said:

"The boy has had some nervous shock. It's not that he can't eat, but that he won't. He has every symptom of a patient suffering from acute hunger. He is ravenous. If we cannot persuade him to eat to-morrow, we will have to resort to forced feeding."

Frau Ursula looked very grave.

Dr. Koenig resumed:

"How about Vasalov?" he asked. "Dobronov? Could

either of them have been indiscreet enough to reveal to the boy that you are not his mother?"

"No, I think not." Frau Ursula hesitated a moment and then told Dr. Koenig of the malevolence with which Hauser had treated the boy, and of the violent quarrel in which Hauser's outrageous treatment of the boy had culminated.

"H'm," said Dr. Koenig, meditatively, "the two are the very antitheses of human types. Their antagonism rests upon some basic law of nature which some Darwin or Wallace of the future must yet formulate for us. There's a difference in albumen, *verehrte Frau*. Guinea-pigs have been poisoned with an injection of serum procured from the eyes of their own species. There's a mystery for you. Rhythm, too, plays a subtle part in the human economy. This is demonstrated in the handwritings of various individuals. The handwriting expert of the future, by comparing the handwritings of different individuals, will be able to tell whether they are inimically or friendly disposed. Then, too, there may be an astral body. The N rays shed by one personality may blend amicably or conflict disastrously with the N rays emanating from another person!"

Frau Ursula listened with some impatience to the Doctor's ruminations. She did not want to hear about serum, or guinea-pigs, or rhythm, or albumen or astral bodies. All she wanted to be told was what was ailing her boy.

"I'll be in the first thing to-morrow morning. Then we'll see what's to be done. But I'm sure his abstention from food is due to a mental, not a physical cause."

In a wholly unexpected way, Dr. Koenig's theory received confirmation within the hour. Frau Ursula, in returning to Guido's room, found him asleep. As usual, books littered his bed, and she removed them cautiously. In doing so, one of the books opened and a sheet of paper, twice folded, fluttered to the floor. The superscription startled her. Hastily depositing the books on a chair, she carried her find to her own room.

The superscription which had caused her such concern read: "To be opened after my death by my mother. Guido Hauser."

With trembling hands Frau Ursula unfolded the paper and read the following remarkable epistle:

When in the cawse of humen life it becomes necessary for won individjule to dissolve the human bands that connect him with another, and to asoom among the spirrits of the dead the equel and sepperret station to which the laws of natjure entitel him, a desent respect for the opinions of his mother requires that he should declair the cawses which impell him to this step.

We hold these trooths to be self-evident that all boys are creayted equel, that they are endoud by there creaytor with serten inalyenable rites, that among these are life, libberty and the pursoot of happiness. That to secgure these rites, parents are institooted, deriving their just powers from the Creaytor, that when any father abyuses these powers, it is the rite of his son to escape from his tyranny. The histry of my father is a histry of repeeted injuries to prove this let facts be submitted to my candid mother.

He has at times entirely ignored me.

He has been brutal to me.

He has tonted me becaws I am weak and sick.

He has tonted me becaws the doctor has forbidden that I must not be whipped.

He has ridicyuled my mother.

He has pretended things about me which are not troo and wot is not troo is a lie.

He has shone he hates me.

And I hate him and will no longer ete wot he pais for nor be beholden to him for my medesinnes and for the support of this declaration, with a firm relies on the Creaytor, I commend my sole to him when I have successfully starved myself to death.

(Signed) Guido Hauser (*gezeichnet*)

Frau Ursula was stunned. She had not believed Dr. Koenig's diagnosis, but this funnily pathetic little document proved it correct. The deliberation with which the child had proceeded to carry out his project of self-destruction left her faint with panic and nausea.

On returning to Guido's room she found that he had wakened. He had missed the books from his bed, and had reached them from the chair, and now sat up in bed hastily

turning over the leaves of the book from which Frau Ursula had taken his Declaration of Death. His gestures were feverishly urgent, his face flushed.

"There was a paper in this book," he said, "and it is gone."

"I have it," Frau Ursula replied, showing it to him, "and I have read it."

The boy's lip began to tremble.

"Guido, when you wrote this, dear, didn't you think at all of the pain you were going to cause me?" she asked, with the utmost gentleness. She had seated herself on the side of his bed, and had taken his hand in hers.

"*Ach, Mutterchen!*" he turned white to the very lips.

Frau Ursula shivered a little. Was hatred so much more potent than love? Or was there present in the child's soul a homicidal instinct, inherited from his fanatic mother? Or, again, had the child's fine sensibilities simply been tortured beyond endurance?

"Answer me, *mein Liebling*," she said.

"Mother, do not look at me like that—I can't stand it." He flung his arms about his mother, and clung to her convulsively.

"Guido, darling, I thought I enjoyed your entire confidence. It seems I was mistaken. If my little lad had come to me with his trouble I might have helped him and saved him and myself a very painful experience."

The child began to sob.

"Guido, *mein lieber Junge*, you must not cry. I have several things of importance to tell you, but I cannot tell them if you cry like that. So, that's better. First of all, dear, you are not indebted to your father for your upkeep. I have independent means, and you have quite a little fortune of your own waiting for you when you come of age. Meanwhile out of my own income, I have always defrayed all expenses for you and myself—your food, clothes, part-rent, the salary for your nurse, your medicines and doctor's bills."

"*Mutterchen! Wirklich?*" There was a note in the child's voice that smote her cruelly. How he must have suffered that his relief should be so great!

"*Wirklich, mein Herz*, and what is more, if your father

continues to badger you, we—you and I—will go away and live by ourselves.”

Guido again began to cry.

“My father would not like that at all,” he sobbed. “I think he hates me so because you love me so much.”

“Come dear, stop crying,” said Frau Ursula. “Will you be a good boy and eat something now?”

“Yes, Mother.”

“Some nice warm milk-toast, with lots of butter and sugar and cream?”

“Yes, Mother.”

“And there’ll be no more nonsense?”

“No, Mother.”

Frau Ursula called Mrs. Thornton and asked her to attend to Guido. She herself must speak to Hauser. She had no very definite idea of what she was going to say, but speak to him she must and that at once. For one thing she was now willing to humble herself to the extent of producing proofs of Guido’s identity. She felt that there must be truth between herself and her husband—truth absolute and unequivocal. She found that she blamed herself subtly for the tragedy which Guido had been preparing. She was, strange to say, not as angry and as indignant with Hauser as might have been expected.

Equipped with the daguerreotype of the first Guido which Dr. Koenig had given her, she entered the dining room where Hauser was sitting over his accounts. So white was her face that Hauser, on glancing up as she entered, involuntarily started to his feet.

“Ursula, are you ill?” he asked.

She shook her head in negation and handed him Guido’s mortuary proclamation.

“Read that,” she commanded.

He scanned the paper hastily. His face darkened.

“Twaddle,” he commented, but when he came to the arraignment of himself, his hand trembled visibly.

“Guido’s been trying to starve himself for a week,” she said, when he had finished reading. “I had Dr. Koenig in this evening—thinking some new ailment was developing. But he assured me there was a mental not a physical cause for the boy’s persistent refusal to eat. Afterwards, by chance, I found this paper. I was forced to tell him that

your money did not pay for his board and medical care. But I cannot keep him confined to his room indefinitely, and if you persist in treating him as you did a week ago I am afraid I shall have to leave you."

Frau Ursula stopped speaking abruptly. She was frightened. She could not have said why.

"You are NOT going to leave me," said Hauser. "I absolutely refuse a divorce."

"There is, however, nothing to prevent me from leaving your house and never coming back."

"No," said Hauser, very quietly, "there is nothing to prevent that."

Frau Ursula became overwhelmingly aware that she had no desire and no intention to carry into effect this tacit threat. She said:

"I am going to be perfectly candid with you. I would rather not leave you. I am horribly afraid of Vasalov, although you persist in pooh-poohing the idea that he will try to abduct Guido. And—well—the fact is, I feel safer with you to protect me than I would if I lived alone with Guido. All this, of course, is very selfish of me, but it is the truth."

A strange look of pleasure, kindly and refined, passed over Hauser's face.

"Thank you for trusting me to that extent," he said, gently.

"There's another thing," she said, and now she was speaking in a forced unnatural voice which made Hauser glance at her sharply. "I told you I had proofs concerning Guido's parentage. I am going to show them to you now. I think it will make a change in our relations."

Her heart was beating so violently that she was forced to pause for a moment.

"I shall be glad to see them," said Hauser, conventionally civil.

Frau Ursula pushed the small daguerreotype across the table toward Hauser.

"Dr. Koenig gave it to me. He was a friend of Guido's grandfather, the von Estritz who emigrated to this country in '48. You can see the resemblance for yourself."

Hauser picked up the shabby little case, with its flourish of scroll-work, and closely scrutinized the faded daguerreo-

type which looked up at him from its frame of faded rose velvet. After a long time he closed the little folding case very gently, and handed it back to his wife.

"Thank you for letting me see this, Ursula," he said.

"And haven't you a word of apology for so shamefully suspecting me all these years?"

"I am very sorry, Ursula. Very. You must forgive me."

This was not as submissive a submission as she had hoped for and as she felt she was entitled to expect. But it sufficed.

Truth to tell he was no more convinced of Guido's nativity than he had even been. Good-nature, compassion, love made him seem persuaded. The proof which to his wife seemed so irrefutable seemed to him no proof at all. Her motive for loving the child as passionately as she did remained unexplained and it was this passionate attachment of hers for the boy which perplexed him, and tried him so sorely, and was the corner-stone and foundation of his suspicion.

Even if Frau Ursula had been cognizant of the inevitable effect on Hauser's mind of her failure to supply this omission, it is doubtful whether an explanation would have been forthcoming. To avow herself unloved by the man to whom she had given the most delicately distilled bloom of her love and worship is an act of heroism to which few women can rise. In spite of her contempt for the unnamable sisterhood with which Hauser had identified her, Frau Ursula would sooner have proclaimed herself guilty of an imprudence than admit that her love had not been reciprocated. Wherein lies still another of the subtle differences which build up the barrier of sex psychology; for what man, loving but unloved, would see in his state of being unloved a thing to be ashamed of?

Moreover, as no two landscape painters will paint the same presentment of the same bit of hedge and meadowland, so no two sets of eyes see a human face from the same angle and in the same focus. In other words, one eye sees a resemblance to this relative, another eye detects a likeness to a different kinsman.

Vavara Alexandrovna and Dmitri Stepanovich bore a striking likeness to each other. Guido resembled both his

paternal grandfather and his own mother. Hauser, with his mind perversely filled with the conviction that Vasalov had been his wife's lover, saw Guido's resemblance to Vasalov; Frau Ursula, her mind as inalienably fixed on the glories of the house of von Estritz saw only the von Estritz resemblance.

And so Hauser and Hauser's wife were further apart than ever, but Hauser's wife did not know it. As the days slipped by she saw in her husband's continued gentleness to herself and renewed kindness to the boy an earnest of a new dawn. He showed a very lovable and human side of his character in these days. She, with very good grace, selected the plans for the house and the site on which it was to be built. That pleased him enormously, and in consequence, he put his best foot forward. The conviction was born in Frau Ursula that they would yet be happy.

She tried forcibly to stifle the memory of Guido's pitiful document, she tried to forget the agony of the days through which both Guido and herself had lived during the weeks preceding the discovery of that document.

Once or twice she essayed trifling overtures. Hauser ignored them—or did not perceive them. Vasalov's re-emergence had evoked Hauser's jealousy in triple extract, and jealousy, like all passions, clouds the reasoning faculties.

One evening Hauser forgot his promise and began to heckle Guido at the dinner-table. The lad behaved admirably. He did not answer Hauser at all, and as soon as he had finished his meat-course, he excused himself and left the table.

"Erich," said Frau Ursula, following a sudden impulse, "don't let us go back to that, please don't! We've been going along so pleasantly."

"Pleasantly," said Hauser, sardonically.

"Pleasantly enough," she modified her statement. "Perhaps not as pleasantly as you might wish." She threw this out jerkily, as an afterthought. To escape the lashings of her conscience, if for no other reason, she desired a complete reconciliation which would place their mock marriage upon an honest and unequivocal footing.

He looked at her sharply. She blushed, and said tremulously:

"Hauser, I am perfectly willing to take up our romance where we dropped it on the dreadful day when Vasalov appeared."

It was unfortunate that she mentioned Vasalov's name. Hauser tingled in every nerve with impotent rancor and resentment. Reddening, he said, indignantly:

"What a sensualist you must think me."

It was crass, it was crude, it was banal. Frau Ursula almost wept with shame. Why, she demanded of herself, why was he so willfully blind?

All the mortification and shame of a woman who feels herself rejected swept over her. But pride, or modesty—and what, in matters such as these is pride but a barricade for modesty—forbade that she espouse the straightforward course with him. She lacked the hardihood to tell her husband frankly that she loved him, that she had forgiven him for his unkindness in the past and that the pretended barter of her love had been a silly, clumsy subterfuge to draw from him renewed protestations of his regard.

After this they drifted further apart than ever.

CHAPTER X

EARLY in May Guido began to improve rapidly. His attempt to starve himself had thrown him back cruelly. But now he suddenly blossomed out into something like boyish wiriness and strength. He took long walks without being fatigued. His flesh became firm and healthy to the touch, his complexion lost its spectral whiteness. And yet, with all this show of returning health, he lost none of his slim, native elegance nor the sense of spirituality which impressed strangers so strongly upon first seeing the child. His dark, liquidly luminous eyes, the black hair which curled ever so lightly at the temples and above the brow, made his white skin seem more dazzlingly white by contrast. He was a very beautiful little boy in these days of returning health. Women turned to look at him on the street with half-smothered ejaculations of pleasure in the pretty child. Mrs. Thornton, speaking to Frau Ursula, pronounced him too comely for an age of corduroy and Norfolk jackets. He would have adorned an earlier era when dark blue velvet and Van Dyck lace collars and cuffs, and sashes of tasseled silk were thought appropriate for little lads as well as for little damsels.

Mrs. Thornton, her employment gone, entered the Anasquoit Hospital to take a course in nursing. The new house was begun and the builder promised to have it ready by the end of August. Hauser rarely came home for supper these days. The new store, the Leviathan, with the enormously extended responsibilities which it entailed, was a severe taskmaster.

But the great event of the spring of 1910 as far as the Hauser household was concerned was Guido's return to school.

That return was in the nature of a transplantation after the lad's two years' exile in bed. School was bound to be a tremendous adventure by virtue both of the commonest commonplace and the stirringly exciting.

The commonplace was comprised in the deadly routine. Excitement was supplied by the bewildering variety of characters unrolled before Guido's dazzled eyes. He had assumed that all boys were patterned after Otto's fashion, or his own, but principally after Otto's. In some ways he knew Otto better than he knew himself, Otto, who was consistently rough, brutal sometimes, unmannerly as a matter of conviction, kind-hearted generally, and—first, last and all the time, with the emphasis which is carried only by the traits of which we are all unconscious—genuine.

He found that boys instead of being as like as peas are as different as different varieties of dogs.

To begin with there was Henry Foerster, a queer, shy, reticent boy. Guido thought from Henry's manner that Henry had taken an insuperable dislike to himself. But one day when Guido's pencil-box had met with an accident and all his pencils in consequence were reduced to pointlessness, Henry, without a word, slipped Guido one of his own impeccable pencils. Later, at recess, when Guido thanked him for saving him from a "bad" mark, Henry flushed and walked away. He was neither a very clever nor a very studious boy, yet somehow he never flunked his exams. He was never known to speak when he could help himself, and the boys had nicknamed him "the Dummy."

Then there was Eddie Erdman. Eddie was hopelessly, grimy—always.

"It's because he's so fat," Otto elucidated, within hearing of the grimy one, "the dirt sticks to him like it was greased on. See?"

Guido smothered a laugh. He was a very polite little boy, and he felt that to laugh at Otto's sally would have been to disgrace himself. He fully expected a first-class fight to ensue between Otto and Eddie, but Fatty, instead of resenting the insult, laughed along with the rest.

"We're going to change his name to 'Rhino,'" said naughty-tongued Otto, "because he has a hide like a rhinoceros."

This caused a new roar of laughter, Rhino again joining in with the others.

"I think it's just grand to have two nick-names," he said, "some of you ain't popular enough to have even one." And as a test of his popularity, he stuck out his tongue

and made a "long nose." Then, to cap the climax, he kicked up his heels in imitation of a ballet dancer. Guido could see that in spite of his fleshiness he was very graceful, but he was trying to make himself appear clumsy and ungainly.

All this happened at recess. The children were out on the street, and two little girls of their class passed them at this moment.

Eddie danced up to them and in a high falsetto voice invited them to dance.

"Nayther of you will honor may," he squealed. "Oh, dare, oh dare, I shall weep. I should so lo-o-o-o-ve to have ye languish in me arms, me darlints."

Erna Friedman and Lieschen Schlick, highly affronted, walked away, noses high in air, the picture of pigtailed dignity.

"My farder says Eddie is a born comedian," Otto confided to Guido. "My farder says he'll do something big on the vaudeville stage one of these days."

Then there was a boy who was the happy possessor of the syllable "von"—magic insignia of rank—as a prefix to his surname. Egon von Dammer was a curious lad. In some respects he did not seem like a boy at all but like a little old man.

Face and figure were youthful enough. He was, in fact, in wonderful physical trim and always immaculately neat. Besides Guido he was the only neat boy in the class, and Egon and Elschen Marlow were unique among the children of the entire school in that they had been born in Germany, a circumstance which earned Egon the sobriquet of "Dutch."

And yet no strict constructionist would have called the boy typically German, excepting perhaps for the arrogance which peered from every feature of the boyish face and for the never-ceasing diligence with which he applied himself to his tasks. He had been to school in Germany for two years; spent a year in Paris in a boy's school and one in England. He was a born linguist and had a well-nigh perfect command of the three great modern tongues. He spoke English not with the German accent which marred the speech of the other boys but with an accent which was decidedly English. He pronounced "either" and "neither"

in the English way, and said "nevyou" instead of nephew, pointing out to the Language teacher who corrected him that his parents desired him to speak English, not United States. The teacher, a young woman, flushed and without further comment continued the lesson. For some reason Egon's impertinence to the teacher fell flat. His classmates did not approve of it. Instinctively they felt that Egon's brand of sauciness was rooted in something ominous and sinister. They themselves—the others—might "answer back" upon occasion, but deep in their hearts they had a wholesome respect for their teachers, and there was moreover, a dead-line which their boyish impudence never essayed to pass. Also, they resented Egon's contempt because it glanced at themselves. The boy with the "von" before his name was not popular among his class-mates.

On the second morning during recess Egon von Dammer came up to Guido.

"You're different from the other boys," he said, with quiet effrontery, by way of introduction. "You look different and you speak differently, too. Your name also is different. 'Guido' is a very aristocratic name. It's as good as mine. Where did you get it?"

"I suppose my parents gave it to me same as your parents gave you yours," Guido replied. Egon's insolence had set his brittle temper to crackling, and Egon perceived this. He laughed, lightly.

"You're jolly well mistaken," he said. "My parents didn't give me my name. My name was given to me centuries ago—before I was born. The eldest son of the von Dammers, *juengere Linie*, for twenty generations has always been named Egon."

In spite of himself Guido was impressed. He was too inexperienced to cover his defeat by a quick parry. He felt and looked foolish.

"What's your last name?" the ruthless Egon continued.

"Hauser."

"H'm. Doesn't fit with Guido. Must have gotten Guido from your mother's side. What was your mother's maiden name?"

"I don't know. And if I did, I wouldn't tell you," said Guido. He was furious.

"Oh, yes, you would," Egon retorted, significantly, "because it would be sure to be something good."

Guido's wrath was appeased. After all, it was a rather fine thing to be singled out by the prince of the class as his sole peer.

"You ask her to-night," Egon continued. "You'll see I'm right."

"I won't ask her," Guido retorted, viciously. "If she'd wanted to tell me she'd have told me without being asked. So there."

"I say," said Egon admiringly, "you're a gentleman, you are."

"Well, if that's being a gentleman, what's the boy who told me to ask her?"

Egon laughed uproariously.

"Believe me," he said, in his delight lapsing into American slang, which, as a rule, he eschewed, "you're some kid. I'm going to like you tremendously."

"Well, I'm not at all sure that I'm going to like you," our young hero retorted, with a crudeness of manner which Otto could not have bettered.

"Oh, yes, you are," Egon assured him, calmly. "Folks always like me when I'm half-ways decent to them."

"Well, why aren't you half-ways decent to everybody, then?"

"Because I do not care for the friendship of everybody. It would bore me to death to have all the rag-tag of this second-hand school fawning on me."

"Fawning!" gasped Guido.

"That's what I said. Take it from me, Guido, the friendship of the inferior for the superior amounts to nothing else," continued the amiable scion of the von Dammers. "When boys are on the same plane, they bear with each other's faults because as a class they have the same aims and amusements."

Guido gasped again. All this was far beyond him. It took him several years to discover that whereas Otto frankly quoted his "farder" on every possible occasion, Egon von Dammer grafted the parental scraps of wisdom upon his own juvenile stock and dispensed the result as vintage of his own distilling.

"My mother's name was Baroness von Dortitz," Egon

continued. "The von Dortitzes rank among the oldest feudal nobility of Prussia, as the syllable 'titz' shows. All names ending with 'titz' or 'tritz' are among Prussia's best. And I had a brother named Ludolf. He was a year younger than myself. He killed himself when he was nine years old."

Guido's blood receded from his heart. He remembered his own abortive attempt at suicide.

"Why did your brother kill himself?" he contrived to ask.

"Because he couldn't learn how to construe Latin or Greek."

Guido was so amazed at the inadequacy of this motive for so momentous an enterprise as suicide that he said nothing.

"It was very unfortunate," said Egon.

"It was dreadful," said Guido. He knew, even if Ludolf's brother didn't, what Ludolf had suffered before he had screwed his courage to the suicide point.

"He was a stupid boy," Egon continued. "He had a bad fall when he was a small baby. He never would have amounted to anything. It was a good thing that his sense of honor was keen enough to make him do away with himself."

"Oh!" Guido ejaculated: he was too shocked for words.

"My father was very proud of him after he had killed himself," Egon continued. "When people of our class come a cropper, as the English say, well, there's nothing left to do but to end it all."

Guido was reduced to utter speechlessness. He conceived the boy at his side to be a sort of monster. But the disconcerting son of one of Prussia's noblest houses upset this latest of Guido's latest conclusions with his next sentence.

"I was very fond of him," said the young Stoic—or was he merely a Spartan?—"I miss him very much. I miss him at night. We slept together. He was not a clever boy but he was kind. He was always trying to give our mother some pleasure. Now I—I'm clever, but I'm not kind. If I allowed myself to be kind I'd turn to—breakfast food."

He laughed, uneasily. From the sound of his voice Guido knew that Egon's throat was rigid.

"Sometimes, when I don't look out, I turn weak," Egon continued, "and then I wish the honor of the von Dammers hadn't required little Ludolf's death. He was such a winsome little chap."

He gulped hard. Guido, with an awkward gesture, placed his hand on Egon's arm. Instantly Egon's face and form stiffened.

"How old was your brother when he began to study Latin?" Guido asked.

"He began to study Latin at six and Greek at eight," Egon replied. "I began a year younger, because I was brighter. Here—in this country—" the old scorn was rampant again in his voice, "they teach you Latin when you're twelve, or not at all. Ridiculous. The educational system of Germany is so much better than the American."

"In what way?" Guido demanded. He could not help but be impressed by the general superiority which Egon exuded.

"Oh, the discipline is better. Do you think I would have dared to answer a German teacher in class the way I answered Miss Dawson this morning? But then, no German teacher would have made the break she did."

"It seems to me," said Guido, "that you are just as fresh to Mr. Helsingrath and Mr. Toenner as you are to the American teachers."

Egon laughed contemptuously.

"Those two pills," he said. "Why, we wouldn't tolerate them as teachers of the lowest *Dorfschule* in Germany. Boys of our class and station wouldn't put up with them as valets or footmen. Ever see Helsingrath eat? He sucks his soup—*schlurft seine Suppe*—and he eats all his solid food with his knife. I wonder he doesn't turn the spoon around when he eats his pudding. As to Toenner, why, that boob, if you showed him a tooth-brush, he wouldn't know what it was for."

Guido caught his breath. Some instinct checked his desire to quarrel outright. He wanted to hear all this boy had to say. But the bell which ended the recess rang just then and terminated their conversation.

Guido usually knew his own mind as well as any other normal boy, but for a long time he gravitated between like and dislike for Egon von Dammer, or more accurately, he

was unable to break up into its primary ingredients the emotional compound which held both admiration and dislike in solution. One of the two feelings must outweigh the other. At first he could not tell which was the stronger. Admiration won out. Egon's mind, like Guido's, was keenly alert. Like Guido, also, he was an omnivorous reader, and the two boys, acting as guide one for the other, amplified and complemented their respective scopes. Moreover, Egon at first had shown his worst traits. When he placed a quietus upon his superciliousness, as he invariably did when alone with Guido, a more charming companion could not be imagined.

Guido had been placed upon a bench intended for two boys, but the other seat was unoccupied during the first week of Guido's incumbency. Various battered articles which lay in the trough under the desk when Guido took possession, led him to observe that he was not the sole tenant.

He questioned Otto.

"Oh, yes," said Otto, "Stan Finlay sits there with you, of course."

The American name made Guido prick up his ears. Egon, with his distinctly foreign personality, had been a great find. "Stan Finley," promising to present a pure specimen of the American type, sounded just as fascinating to our young hybrid as Egon's magic ensemble.

"Is Stan Finley sick?" he asked.

"Nope. Father and mother went on a trip to Niagara Falls and took him along. He'll be back next week."

"What does 'Stan' stand for?"

"Standish."

"But that's a last name."

"Yes, of course. Crazy American way of giving last names as first names."

Guido did not think the custom "crazy" at all. He thought it charming. He was wild to make the acquaintance of Standish Finlay. Bob Hastings had been filched away from his ken by a jealous and pilfering fate, and he dreaded to think what accidents might befall Stan before he got back to Anasquoit. The train might be derailed, or there might be a collision, or he might slide down over the

Falls. Guido was very selfishly concerned all that week about Standish Finlay's safety.

Monday came and the wanderer returned safely to the fold.

Stan was a remarkably handsome boy, tall, lithe, active, with features almost classically perfect. He was the type of boy that is father to the Gibson man. He was very well dressed in a leisurely, off-hand, careless sort of way which contrasted sharply with the painstaking neatness of Egon's and Guido's attire. Ever since his tenth year he had been permitted to select his own clothes, his father believing that a child's individuality should be fostered and not suppressed, and his manner of dressing accurately mirrored his character. He seemed incapable of making an effort that seemed like an effort. He was continually going off junketing with his parents, yet he acquitted himself admirably at the examinations, and his reports always came off with flying colors. Only his imperfect knowledge of German kept him from outstripping Otto and Egon and—now that he had returned to school—Guido as well.

He came in late during the morning session. Guido regarded him curiously, and was curiously regarded in turn. Recess was almost over when Stan, having escaped from half a dozen boys who had literally engulfed him, made up to Guido.

"Say," he said, in his off-hand, careless way, "you're the kid with the sore spine, aren't you?"

Guido blushed. This was not the first indication that his "sore spine" had become one of the traditions of the school. But there was not the least cause for offense. Stan had labeled him for identification, not to poke fun at him.

"Yep," said Guido.

"Awfully glad you're better. I thought of you often. Would have come in to see you with Otto some time, but my Ma said your Ma mightn't like it. Beastly shame to have been laid up for years."

"Oh, I didn't really mind," said Guido, a little vaingloriously, and feeling wonderfully heroic.

"Why didn't you mind?" Stan inquired, curiously.

"Should I have minded?" Guido flung back.

"You're a regular Yankee, aren't you," he said. "Answer a question with a question."

Stan laughed.

"Usually," said Guido, "I'm called a German-American."

"That's rank nonsense," said Stan, with decision. "My father says there is no such animal as a German-American."

Here Guido made mental note of the fact that American boys have the habit of quoting their fathers just as Otto did.

"Well, what do you call us who have German parents?"

"Just plain Americans, like myself. The only genuine American is the American Indian. Father says if we're all going to claim attention for the country we originally hailed from—Germany, England, France, Italy, Spain—by sticking the name of a foreign country in front of the 'American,' we'll be a sorry lot of natives and not fit to live on American soil. That's what my dad says. And my dad is pretty nearly always right. Dad's great."

Guido wished he might have said the same.

He saw he was going to like Stan Finlay immensely. No complicated chemical retort was required to decide that for him. With his usual impulsiveness he felt impelled to speak his mind, though obliquely.

"I'm awf'ly glad I'm in the same seat with you," he said.

Stan looked surprised. He seemed taken aback.

"Are you though?" he asked, his voice less hearty than before.

"Yes," Guido continued, bravely. "You see, I've known no *real* American boys until now—only German-Americans—like myself."

"There you go again," said Stan, laughing, and hearty again. "You're a queer kid, you are. I can tell you, though, I'm real glad you turned up. Otto's all right, and Eddie Erdman is all right, too, but the rest of this class—well, they're a junk lot of kids, look as if they did mother's chores before breakfast and forgot to tidy up ever after. Gee, there's the bell."

Guido and Stan became fast friends. The Finlays were well-to-do people and Standish was an only child. They lived in a four story brownstone house on Bismarck near

Juniper street which was furnished throughout in old Colonial style. In the bedrooms rag carpets lay upon the parquet floors, and prints showing Colonial interiors and exteriors hung upon the walls. The dining-room furniture was genuine Sheraton, which had been handed down from generation to generation in the family of Stan's mother, and Guido was hugely amused by the tremendous fork and knife urns, strongly resembling mortuary urns, which ornamented the enormous sideboard. Guido had never seen anything like it before. Nor had he seen anything like the collapsible card tables of mahogany inlaid with borders of satin-wood, which were arranged against the walls of the parlor; nor like the wonderful Heppelwhite chairs, also genuine, which seemed much too frail for use; nor like the enormous wing-chair in which Stan's grandmother sat and knitted; nor like the old broken-voiced spinet, nor like the four-yard-long divan with arms like lyres; nor like the library table with ball and claw feet; nor like the long mirror which peeped out from between fluted columns of gilt in the hall.

It was the first time that he had visited a "real" American home, and he felt that at last he was treading the simon-pure soil of America.

Before a week had gone by the two boys had visited each other. A glamour and enchantment accrued to Stan for Guido which was never eclipsed. He loved the clear, penetrating Anglo-Saxon voice, the pure profile, the mass of waving, dark-brown hair. He loved, most of all the scant, close-clipped Anglo-Saxon words which Stan used. They appealed to him like a neatly trimmed box of hedge.

In his eyes Stan was quite perfect. He should have liked to be just like him.

June came, bringing examinations which frightened everybody, even the teachers, and a school-picnic which was supposed to be a fountain of pure joy.

Poor Guido! The weeks that preceded that first school-picnic of his were destined to harrow him cruelly. There were various reasons for this. The chief reason was that Guido had discovered the girls, or rather, to speak truth, the girls had discovered him. There had been thrust upon him suddenly the preposterous fact of sex. It happened in this way.

One day, on entering the class-room, he heard the Rhino exclaim:

"Here comes the lady-killer."

"What d'ye mean, Fatty?" Guido inquired, innocently.

"What do I mean? Ask Otto."

Guido looked questioningly at Otto who, disgruntled for reasons of his own, looked away without replying.

"Dear me, dear me," the Rhino wailed, "how attractive we are. What pretty, black eyes we have. What lovely, lovely black hair we have. What nice, nice hands we have. And they are *always* clean. And our pretty, pretty hair is always well combed and brushed. And our pretty little fingers are always manicured. And how the pretty, lovely, little innocent dears love us!"

Guido understood at last. He turned purple, first with embarrassment, then with rage.

"Steady, boy," whispered Stan. He gripped Guido's coat firmly and pulled Guido down into his seat. "Keep your temper," he whispered. "Don't make a fool of yourself, now, will you? Look at the girls."

Thus admonished, Guido looked across to the girl's aisle. Some were giggling, some were indignant, some were uncomfortable, some were brazening it out.

"Tell you after school," whispered Stan.

For the past fortnight, it seems, some of the little girls had been speculating as to the object of Guido's affection, for with juvenile sophistication it seemed incredible to these little ladies that Guido was as different to the attractions of their sex as he seemed. He never spoke to a girl. He sharpened no pencils for any youthful charmer; presented no one with penny candies or bananas. He stole neither hair ribbon nor kisses. The latter omissions, particularly the last, constituted the offense hardest to condone. Erna Friedman and Lieschen Schlick, the two most aggressive of these youthful daughters of Eve, decided that such indifference and impartiality must be punished. They determined, when occasion offered, to hazard the bestowal of a kiss upon this coy Joseph. They had an idea that they might entrap him into one of the kissing games which were countenanced by the parents of some of the children at birthday parties.

One of the boys, kept in during recess, overheard the

conspiracy which was hatching in the courtyard directly below the window at which he sat. The news spread like wildfire through the class. The children were ungovernable during the session that followed. Bad marks for improper deportment rained hard and fast without any corrective effect. The whispering, the giggling, the explosions of uncontrollable laughter continued. The entire class, as a result, was kept in.

Guido had been absent from school on the afternoon when all this happened. When he appeared the next morning, Fatty Erdman—the Rhino—gibed at him with the result above outlined.

From that day on Guido lived in constant terror that he might be kissed. He feared, not without reason, that the school picnic would be the occasion upon which the plot which centered about him might be consummated. He fought desperately against going. His mother insisted. He was ashamed to take her into his confidence. At last he yielded to her wishes because there was nothing else to do.

Guido's last remnant of hope was torn to tatters when, instead of raining, as conceivably it might have done, the morning of the picnic dawned bright and cool and clear—no prospects even of a shower which might have sent him home before the blighting hand of love's game could be laid upon him.

All morning, and at luncheon—set in a rectangular pavilion at tables so long that the features of the children at the extreme end were indistinguishable—all went merry as a wedding bell. The little girls, in white dresses and pink and blue ribbons, looked charming, and behaved themselves like little ladies. It was hard to believe that those airy little creatures might be harboring sinister designs against any one in their dainty little heads. Guido was a gallant little lad. He decided suddenly, with simon-pure masculine logic, that such a suspicion was as insulting as it was absurd. He began to breathe freely, and set about to enjoy the afternoon with Stan and Otto and Egon.

They were on their way to the lake shortly after dinner—Stan was excellent at the oars—when their way was suddenly barred by a bevy of little girls. There were Erna Friedman and Lieschen Schlick, always the ring-leaders in all mischief, and half a dozen others, laughter in their

eyes and scorn on their lips. There also, a little apart, stood dear little Elschen Marlow.

Elschen had not been able to carry out her intention of presenting Guido with a large bouquet of flowers from her garden, because he had, after all, become well so suddenly, and she had given no sign of her admiration for him now that he was well and strong. She was the only little girl in the class upon whom Guido's eyes occasionally lingered. He thought that he would have liked to have a little sister like her. She seemed so sweet and bright and clean, like the blue sky or violets or the silver waters of a brook. Frau Ursula, of course, had not told Guido of the conversation that had taken place between herself and Elschen, and Elschen, therefore, was to Guido nothing more than a name.

The precise, dainty little creature looked very charming this June day in a little smock of dimity, much more elaborately and modishly trimmed than the dresses she usually wore. The warm weather had whitened and smoothed her arms and her short sleeves were festooned with tiny rosettes made of pink and light blue silk which gave her a festive appearance. She looked very dear and sweet.

Erna Friedman stepped forward. When she spoke she addressed Guido pointedly.

"There is going to be dancing," she said, "will you come?"

She spoke German, as usual. She spent her summer vacations in Germany, with her grandparents, on a "*Gut*," and she spoke English only when it became unavoidable that she should do so. Then, when unavoidable, she treated the language of Great Britain and the United States as if it were a huge joke, purposely misspeaking and using incorrect grammar and preposterous idioms.

"Thanks, no," said Guido. "We're going boating."

"Better come," Lieschen put in, boldly. "There are going to be games, too. And the forfeits will be kisses."

Now this was a palpable untruth. Guido knew, and Egon, Otto and Stan knew, and so did all the girls, that the *Herr Direktor* was violently opposed to kissing games of every description and would not allow any games of the sort to be played in the pavilion.

Guido did not reply at once, and Erna and Lieschen regarded him with sly, heckling looks. Suddenly something stirred in Guido. A strange change came over him. He had feared the moment when the little vixens would begin to torment him more than he had ever feared anything in all his life. More even, than he had feared death. Much more. He had feared it with the hot, uncomfortable, prickling fear with which human-kind fears being made ridiculous. But now that he was actually spread-eagled for the barbecue, his fear left him. He felt heroic, adventuresome, aggressive.

"I'm afraid," he said with deadly composure, "that you girls are going to be disappointed if you expect kisses from me or the other fellers. The *Herr Direktor* won't stand for it, you know."

"It's not we girls who'll be disappointed, Guido," said Erna Friedman, smiling coquettishly.

"You're a very rude little boy to say something like that," said little Elschen Marlow in her intent, old-fashioned way and with a heat which showed that her hero was in danger of toppling from his pedestal.

As Guido looked at her his face softened.

"You must not call me rude, Elschen," he said, gently.

"But you are rude!" the child stamped her foot indignantly. "It's horrid of you to pretend that the girls want to kiss you." The child spoke in good faith and young as the boys were they understood this thoroughly.

Guido laughed. Indignation became the golden-haired, blue-eyed child. She was as modest in her demeanor with boys as he was shy with girls. And she was the only one of the group of little girls about whom there was nothing brazen. She was Eve before the Fall. The others presented a composite picture of the first mother after the catastrophe. She was Eve defensive, they were examples of Eve aggressive, coquettish, wantonly seductive.

"You know, Guido," bold-mouthed Erna Friedman said, "you are not a bit like other boys. Other boys aren't afraid to kiss the girls." She was a pretty girl, very pretty with self-conscious and bold but not coarse beauty. The well-developed physique, the expressive mouth, the poise and carriage of her comely head foreshadowed maturity.

"Oh! I'm afraid to kiss the girls, am I?" Guido laughed

outright. The situation was really droll. He felt a delightful sensation of superiority, a new sort of superiority which had nothing to do with his scepter of Polysyllabic King. The sense of easy mastery which was its concomitant was exquisite, delicious. These girls, silly, beribboned, beruffled things, thought they were playing with him. Wondrous delusion! It was almost a pity to shatter it. Yet, since it was a matter of choice between the pleasure which the shattering would involve for himself, or the joy which the maintenance would afford them—there was no more to be said. He was as unaltruistic as a Katydid which swallows a fly, and as impartial regarding the choice of his victim.

While he stood there smiling happily—sheepishly as they thought—he was coldly calculating whether it would be easier to catch Erna or Lieschen. He was not a very quick runner, and he hated to run right after eating, anyhow. But apparently the thing had to be done.

Erna, he ruminated, was swifter of foot than Lieschen, but became winded more quickly. He decided that strategy might stand him in better stead with Erna than with Lieschen. He decided to scotch Erna. Just then his eyes happened to alight on short-sleeved Elschen Marlow—Elschen of the sky-blue eyes and moonlight hair.

Who shall say at what age that compound fracture of the human organism which involves heart, soul, senses—all, in brief, that the poor human calls his own—and which we euphemistically call love, begins. As easy to fix the precise historical date when the first tadpole changed into a fish, or the first fish became an amphibian, or the first amphibian evolved itself into the intermediate link from which the lord and flower of creation is derived.

Certain it is that our hero's sense of strategic niceties was wiped away more quickly than words can tell as he gazed upon Elschen's sparkling blue eyes, and her golden hair and her soft, dimpled arms. Since he must kiss, he would kiss Elschen, and no one else.

"I'll show you whether I'm afraid to kiss the girls," he cried, suddenly resolute. "I can't very well kiss all of you—but I'm going to kiss one of you—I'm going to kiss Elschen Marlow."

Erna and Lieschen stared, incredulous, chagrined, morti-

fied. Elschen stared, bewildered, frightened, not comprehending. Her blue eyes dilated. Her intent little face, red with indignation a minute ago, became quite pale with a much subtler emotion.

"But I don't want you to kiss me," the child cried, stamping her foot.

"I know you don't, and that's why I am going to do it," Guido cried, and sportsmanship, or kindness, or some more secret stirring of the soul, prompted him to add:

"I'm going to give you a chance to run away."

The little girl was paralyzed with bewilderment and Guido made another remarkable discovery. He did not wish her to be too easy a prey. He wanted her to run and to run hard. He didn't want to kiss her here in the presence of all those gaping girls and boys.

"One—two—three!" he sang out, with generous intervals between counts.

Elschen suddenly became galvanized into life, into unbelievably active, rapid life. Guido, although greater height gave him the advantage of slightly longer legs, was, because of his inability to run very fast, left behind her at a quickly widening distance.

The girls laughed. The boys scowled. They were furious with Guido for not executing sentence on the spot—for so manifestly allowing Elschen to escape.

Too quick a start makes for bad momentum. After they had left the beaten track and penetrated into the spacious lap of a narrow-lipped snow and sun-dappled daisy field, Elschen's pace slackened perceptibly. Suddenly she began to lag. Guido, who had been running slowly, saw that he would overtake her in another minute.

They were now out of sight of the others. No merry-makers disturbed the lazy contentment of the scene. Guido followed at his slow, ambling run. The little girl stumbled over a tree stump, hidden from view by the daisies which waved around it, and fell. Guido reached her and helped her to her feet and brushed her pretty dress for her and assured her it was not torn. Only then he looked at the hot, flushed little face so bewitchingly near his own, and allowed his smile to proclaim his victory. Little Elschen looked so frightened and so hot and uncomfortable that Guido was almost tempted to forego the spoils of the

victor. The others would never know whether he had kissed her or not. And he was really sorry for Elschen. The June day, sweet and balmy though it was in the shade, had mounted a ruthless sun. He decided to let her go—unkissed.

Then a curious thing happened. Wisdom beyond his years came to him. Her eyes were shining with the emotion of fear, it is true, but Guido perceived with the nicest lucidity that if she was afraid that he might kiss her, she was much more afraid that he might not. Mixed emotions of the feminine heart! Tangled wires of the human soul! He had glimpsed the Gordian knot before, but this was a new, more fascinating, more tantalizing version.

He cut it neatly by planting a kiss as delicate as a moonbeam and no more substantial than a spider's web upon the flushed cheek of the little maid.

The fright died out of the starry blue eyes. The heaving of her bosom subsided. Her plump little hands unclenched themselves. She was her dignified, controlled, intent little self once more, but her primness had changed its complexion. It had been sweetened, and it was he who had sweetened it!

Divine moment! Self-evidently the novelty of a first experience can never be enjoyed twice. The memory of Elschen's cheek, soft and velvety as the impalpable down of a chick, was destined to linger in his memory. He thought of it at the most improbable and unexpected moments. After hours of hard and concentrated study, or barely less laborious play, in a jasmine-scented dusk or at daybreak sweet with the call of the robin or the song of the thrush, the memory of Elschen's soft little cheek would suddenly flash upon him and fill him with a haunting, teasing unrest.

The severed Gordian knot has an unfair habit of putting itself together again, and borrowing Hydra's power, multiplying its snarls and tangles a hundredfold.

"I say, Guido," said Otto, as they were walking home from school on all but the last day, "isn't it great that you're all right now?"

"Yes," said Guido, indifferently. Already his long illness seemed remote, improbable, hazy. The keen, vigorous, healthy every-day life which lapped him around had forced

the abnormal, unwholesome life which he had led for two years to recede into the background of his thoughts.

"I never told you," Otto continued, "but I used to lie awake nights, just thinking about you and your sore back. Once I got to crying so hard I woke my farder."

Guido received this in stolid silence. It was not that he was not moved. On the contrary, he was deeply touched. Besides, Otto's words had made vivid and distinct the recollections which had seemed so dim and so distant only a minute before.

For a moment he could not speak. He wanted to tell Otto that he was an awfully good sort, but his voice wouldn't come. But Otto did not take his friend's silence amiss. He was unaware that lying awake nights and crying over a sick friend might be construed as a doughty deed.

Otto was playing with a hard rubber ball, which he threw up into the air and then caught again as it fell back.

Egon von Dammer and Stan were waiting for them at the next corner. Stan did not like Egon. "You'll find him out some day, you mark my word," he was in the habit of preaching to Guido. He avoided Egon whenever he could. Chancing to leave the class-room together with Egon that afternoon, he was too manly "to give him the slip," in his own phrase. But he looked annoyed and dour, and Guido hurried forward and paired off with Egon.

Stan loitered behind, caught Otto's ball as it descended and pitched it back to him. Thus the boys walked along the street, Guido and Egon leading, Stan and Otto pitching the ball to and fro as they walked.

To hit a bird on the wing is no feat at all compared to catching a ball traveling at high speed while walking backwards. Unconsciously both boys were putting more and more muscle back of the pitch. Their hands ached with the impact of the ball, but they liked the hot soreness of their palms. It relieved the mental strain of the day's work.

Once Otto missed his catch. He lagged behind, found the ball and without waiting to estimate the lengthened trajectory—for Stan had gone right on—pitched the ball at Stan full force. Stan strained every muscle to catch the ball, but the ball sped on, curved downward, narrowly

missed Stan's hand and struck Guido a resounding blow in the back. Guido, without a sound, dropped his books and pitched forward, ashen-gray. Egon caught him or he would have fallen prone to the ground.

Otto's dismay exceeded the humanly bearable. Whatever Guido's suffering was at the moment—and it was great—it was as nought compared to the flaming pit of misery which had opened and swallowed Otto earthquake-like at one hideous gulp. Big boy as he was, he began crying aloud, his mouth wide open, the tears streaming down his face in an unbelievably thick curtain.

"I've hurt Guido! I've hurt him!" he screamed. His words were barely intelligible, for they proceeded from the depth of a panting chest past a rigid throat and taut vocal chords and out through a gaping, unenunciating mouth.

"Stop bawling for God's sake and help me home," said Guido, between clenched teeth.

But Otto could not be prevailed upon to touch Guido. He seemed in that dreadful moment of realization to have conceived himself as a human sledge-hammer, a Caliban, a contaminating pariah.

Guido screwed a smile—a ghastly smile—into his face, drawn from some unsuspected reservoir of courage.

"It's not as bad as you think, Otto," he said, "but for heaven's sake stop your howling."

But poor Otto lacked the power to stop the strange noises which he was making. He was demoralized by the catastrophe which he had brought upon his friend.

A crowd was gathering. From the four corners of the earth came the idlers, the curious, the sympathetic and the bored. Blowsy women, their attention attracted by Otto's horrid hubbub, leaned far out of their windows to see what was happening. Some, realizing that something surpassing in horror the ordinary tragedies of childhood was occurring, began shouting, "Oh, my God, Oh, my God!" thereby adding to the tumult. Others, realizing nothing but that the picture-book of life was presenting a somewhat unusual pageant, brought cushions for the window-sills, and leaned their bare, work-coarsened arms upon them to enjoy the procession in comfort.

Meanwhile Egon and Stan, with Guido leaning heavily upon them, were slowly making their way through the

moving frame of humanity which surrounded them. Guido could hardly move his legs, much less would his legs support his weight. His two friends almost carried him. But all the while, during that agonized homeward march, the courageous smile which he had stuck upon his face, remained upon it. Perhaps he lacked the strength to remove it and throw it away. It was like a yesterday's rose—remaining in the buttonhole which it had once graced with unwithered loveliness.

All during his martyrdom he did not once cry out or moan. His under-lip bled—he had bitten into it in his desperate need for an outlet of his agony—but he did not cry out. But when Stan and Egon, assisted by Otto, whose cries had ceased at last, had gotten Guido safely up the stoop, where Frau Ursula stood, summoned by some other child, with terror in her eyes, he fell forward into his mother's arms in a dead faint.

CHAPTER XI

DR. KOENIG was not in town, a circumstance which caused Frau Ursula to reflect that it never rains but it pours. With considerable misgivings she summoned his understudy.

Dr. Erdman was a brother of the Rhino, but he and Fatty were as different as it is possible for two human beings to be. Dr. Koenig's assistant was tall and slender, and very, very gentle. His gentleness was not assumed. It was the outward token of an unusually tender character. The man's sweetness and charm were to become proverbial in the Anasquoit of his generation.

He speedily captivated Frau Ursula. He made Guido comfortable very quickly. He smiled cheerfully yet sympathetically. He promised to find a nurse that would please. His manner was as soothing to the harassed woman as a bread-and-milk poultice.

"How badly is Guido hurt?" Frau Ursula demanded of him at the door.

The young physician became very grave.

"I cannot say," he said. "It may be a matter of weeks."

"Weeks!"

"No longer I hope."

Then Frau Ursula understood that the kind voice wished to say no more at the present.

Within an hour after he left the house Mrs. Thornton appeared with bag and baggage, smiling an aggressively cheerful smile. She announced that she had come to stay until Guido was better. A miracle? Ah, no. It was so simple. Dr. Erdman had been house surgeon until recently at the Anasquoit Hospital. He was a prime favorite with everybody, and SO sympathetic. Frau Ursula had seen that for herself. And he had only to say the word, and presto! the management fell all over itself to oblige him.

"But how did he know about you and us?" Guido de-

manded, a loosely constructed sentence whose import was entirely intelligible to Mrs. Thornton.

"Oh, I happened to tell him all about your case one day," said Mrs. Thornton lightly, with a blush. Later in the evening she admitted that "there was something between them." Frau Ursula already knew that her married life had not been happy. Her little lad, her only ray of hope and happiness, had died three months after she had obtained her divorce. Frau Ursula guessed that for decency's sake she would allow a year to elapse—her husband had died a month after the divorce had gone into effect—and that Mrs. Thornton would then become Mrs. Erdman.

This last fact she allowed to percolate into Guido's mind during the evening. He wondered a little at the unblushing hardihood which could find the heart to change the name of a Signer for that of Erdman. But he did not wonder long. His appetite for the romantic in history had suffered a retrogression. His introduction to the romantic in love had eclipsed it. He thought of Elschen and kissed Mrs. Thornton's cheek with a new appreciation, picturing to himself the evaluation which slim, handsome Dr. Erdman must place upon it.

Herr Baumgarten called with Otto shortly after supper. Poor Otto! He had lain sleepless on other nights, thinking of his friend's suffering, while innocent of that suffering, what pangs would he endure now with conscience holding a somber vigil at the bedside, whispering: "But for you your friend would be well!"

Otto's face was swollen and red from weeping. His father said he had cried incessantly since returning home. He had eaten no supper. It was the first time in the memory of his parents that he the lad had refused food.

"You had better go right to Guido's room, Otto," said Frau Ursula, kindly. She had felt inclined to blame Otto earlier in the day, but the sight of those inflamed eyes with their beseeching look of dumb misery, made her forget her own misery in his.

"Will he see me?" Otto inquired from a dry throat. "Doesn't he hate me? *Liebe, liebe Frau Hauser*, I would give my life to make this thing undone. Does he not hate me?" the poor wretch demanded again. "If he hates me I shall die. But what good will that do *him*?"

"He does not hate you, Otto," Frau Ursula assured the unhappy boy. "How could he? His best friend. And such a friend as you've been." Tears stood in her eyes. She caressed the tousled hair, and smoothed it back from the boy's throbbing temples and feverishly hot brow. "It might have happened to any of the other boys just as well as to you."

"Why didn't it, then?" Otto cried wildly. "Why should it have happened to me? To ME? Does Egon care for him as I do? Does Stan? Does Eddie? You know they don't. Why should *my* hand have been singled out to hurt Guido?"

Frau Ursula had not suspected the phlegmatic-seeming boy of such emotion. The black despair and self-loathing which looked from his eyes frightened her.

"Otto," she said, speaking sternly to check his hysteria, "if you talk like this I will not be able to allow you to see Guido. And he wants to see you badly."

"Does he? Does he, really?" There came a rift in the dark cloud of his misery. At a sign from Frau Ursula, he rushed wildly out of the room. At Guido's door he stopped, overcome by a dread for which he had no words. Thus might a murderer feel in approaching sanctuary.

Guido had heard Otto's footstep. Even grief could not moderate the heavy thump-thump with which Otto lumbered along.

"Otto, is it you? At last! Come in."

Otto, plucking up courage, charged the door and stood at the threshold trembling. Then, suddenly, he made a wild rush for Guido's bedside, and dropping upon his knees, began to cry as if his heart were breaking.

Guido, lying flat on his back and unable to stir, allowed his fingers to fumble blindly for his friend's hair. They encountered an ear instead. Guido's hand flattened itself against that carressingly.

"Don't you feel so bad, Otto. I know how you feel."

"You think you do but you don't," sobbed the malefactor.

"Well, perhaps I don't. I can tell you, though, at the present moment I'd rather be myself than you—and I'm not overcomfortable."

Sympathy so delicate and precious could not fail of its effect. Otto's sobs subsided.

"Oh, Guido," breathed Guido's slave abjectly, "I wouldn't have done it for worlds."

Guido, whose sense of humor could not be impaired even by a writhing back, smiled at the childish literality of this asseveration.

"Wouldn't you, though, Otto?" he said. "Now I thought you did it on purpose and just were sorry afterwards."

"Oh, Guido!" Otto's tear-stained, horrified face lifted itself from the snowy counterpane leaving a smudge behind it. "Oh, Guido, you didn't really think that?"

Guido laughed.

"You can laugh!" Otto was scandalized. What had laughter to do in the midst of tragedy.

"Why not? Do you intend never to laugh again?" Guido teased.

Otto collapsed upon the floor. He sat staring at Guido and saying nothing.

"Don't you?" Guido urged.

"I don't believe I shall," said Otto.

"Don't be a chump," said Guido. "I sha'n't like you a bit if you're going to be as solemn as a funeral."

This threat had its desired effect.

"I'll do anything in the wide world to please you, Guido," said Otto, with a new meekness. "Only not to-night. To-night I cannot laugh."

And to that reservation he held. The age-old instinct for penance had awakened in him, and like all untried elemental instincts it exacted obedience.

Mr. Baumgarten, after his Otto's precipitate flight from the room, came forward out of the corner from which he had watched his son's abandonment to remorse.

"You are more than kind, *verehrte Frau*," he said. "I came here expecting to find justifiable resentment. I find forgiveness, humane and absolute."

"It would be signally unfair to blame a child for such an accident," Frau Ursula replied, a little magniloquently. She forgot that she had been guilty of the "signal unfairness" until there had been thrust upon her vision Otto, with his desperate, tear-smeared visage.

"How badly was Guido hurt?" Mr. Baumgarten pursued.

"I do not know. Dr. Erdman would not commit him-

self. I imagine we may have the specialist over in a day or two. We will decide to-morrow."

"Weeks in bed?"

"I think—I am afraid—months."

"That is bad." Mr. Baumgarten paused. "Otto—you have seen for yourself—is disconsolate."

"His condition alarms me," said Frau Ursula. "You will have to be kind to him, Herr Baumgarten," she added, a little uncertainly. She thought Mr. Baumgarten quite capable of flogging Otto into the bargain.

"He rejoices me," said Mr. Baumgarten, with a snap of his ominous jaw. "I sometimes feared that the boy might be deficient in moral responsibility. I find he has a moral sense, after all. I regret that your boy was the unhappy means of bringing to light this gratifying discovery."

"Otto is a very fine boy, Mr. Baumgarten," said Frau Ursula, with a curious mixture of sincerity and insincerity. She was sincere because she meant what she said. Her insincerity consisted in the fact that Otto's fineness had dawned on her fully four hours later than on his father, while she spoke as if she had been in possession of this item of knowledge for years.

"From you, *verehrte Frau*, that is a compliment, indeed. But he is not as fine as your son."

"Each character has its own points," rejoined Frau Ursula. "Guido had his, Otto has others."

"I should really like to know what good qualities my boy possesses that yours lacks," said Mr. Baumgarten. He was a small, squat man, with a heavy, homely face. He always spoke a little didactically, a little dictatorially. He was something of a martinet at home. It was difficult for him, when away from home, to maintain for any length of time the deferential attitude toward women required by social usage. He believed that Frau Ursula had spoken without conviction, and as he abhorred the polite small talk which corrupts and emasculates society, he thought it his bounden duty as a man and as the father of a family to make her acknowledge the untruth she had uttered.

She was a little amazed, a little amused by what she conceived to be cloaked impertinence.

"Ah," she said, lightly, "it is tolerably easy to tell them apart."

"That, I imagine, is due to their physical differences."

"Is it?" she smiled mysteriously. "Infuse Otto's soul in Guido's body, Guido's soul in Otto's, and I'm quite certain that neither you nor I nor any one of us will recognize either of the boys."

"I never speculate on vagaries," he replied. His heaviness had deepened into ponderosity. As an afterthought, he added:

"Perhaps this is a new-fangled religion. I am a Christian, madam."

She perceived that he was temperamentally incapable of understanding that anyone—least of all a woman—should dare to poke fun at him. She pitied him.

"No," she said, quietly, "it is not a religion."

Now that her voice was as soberly unphosphorescent as his own, he became satisfied and tranquil. He reverted to their original topic.

"You have not yet told me in which virtue my son excels yours," he said.

She marveled at the tactlessness of his persistence.

"For one thing," she said, "Otto is more single-minded than Guido."

Otto's father swelled with pride, then very properly looked regretful because of the implied dispraise of her own son. Apparently it did not occur to him that single-mindedness might be due quite as much to a dearth of versatility and humor as to a superior degree of sincerity. Frau Ursula was vastly—and as she felt, naughtily—entertained.

"We intend to leave for our modest little cottage in Pike County next week," he said. "Otto refuses to go."

"He will change his mind in a few days."

"Not so. I know my son. He is disobedient because he is forgetful, not because he is self-willed. Once in a great while he tells me point-blank that he will not do a thing. And then he is like a mule, and I have learned from bitter experience not to try to force him to do as I wish."

"Ah!" murmured Frau Ursula. So the ponderous one

had moments in which he realized the limitation of his powers.

"So there we are. We are leaving for the country next week, as I've said. And Otto won't come with us."

"He could, of course, stay with us."

"I was hoping you would suggest it. He will be no trouble, I think. He's good about helping. He sweeps the sidewalk and cleans all the windows for his mother every week, and he does all her errands and marketing."

"My maid does the cleaning and I do the marketing," said Frau Ursula, prosily kind. "But I shall, nevertheless, be very glad to have Otto with us for the summer. It will be wonderful for Guido."

"There's the matter of his board," said Mr. Baumgarten, heavily.

"As to that, Otto, of course, stays with us as a dear friend," said Frau Ursula, quickly.

"Not to be thought of," said Otto's father.

She saw the pugnacious jowl flattening itself into a formidable square and as she had no stomach for further argument with this sublime egoist, she said, with a smile that was bland enough although her eyes were chill and distant:

"As you wish."

Mr. Baumgarten anathematized her in secret. That was the trouble with these highbrow women. His Grete would never have dared to smile at him or any other male creature with such a superior air. The equality of Frau Ursula's manner teased and harrowed him for days. It irritated him because he believed that she had meant to irritate him. Possibly his irritation would have been still more profound if some malicious imp had apprised him of the truth—that she had taken not the least thoughts of his emotions in answering him.

On examining Guido the next day Dr. Erdman expressed the belief that Guido had not sustained any serious physical injury, and that shock more than injury was causing his manifest discomfort. He was not quite certain, however, and he suggested that Frau Ursula have the specialist, who had treated Guido before, come over from New York.

Dr. Erbach, after giving Guido a thorough examination,

spoke of putting the back in plaster, but reserved final judgment until a week should have elapsed. He came thrice that week. Twice the back was cauterized—in sections. Two weeks were allowed for the back to heal thoroughly after the cauterization. Then Guido was sheathed in plaster.

Guido's behavior was angelic. No revilement of torture or torturer passed his lips. He bore the torments which nature and science alike inflicted upon him with equal patience. His fortitude, his cheerfulness wore so saintly an air that all who attended to him felt themselves to be brutes thrice over. Their own health seemed indecent in the face of his martyrdom, and the occasional pleasures which they snatched surreptitiously, such as pleasant walks and moonlight evenings and—in Mrs. Thornton's case—the finer phases of love, appeared even more piratical and indecorous.

Frau Ursula was heartbroken. And yet—and yet—pitiful, incomprehensible perversity of the human heart! She was not wholly sorry to see her own frail, self-absorbed, and almost morbidly delicate and delicate-minded Guido emerging from the hard, brown, worldly-minded, happy-go-lucky chrysalis in which he had been swathed for months. This Guido she understood. The other Guido, delightful and winsome as he had been, had been a stranger. Now she knew for a certainty that within the husk of the strange Guido lurked her own imaginative, magnetic, tender-hearted joy.

She reproached herself for not having gloried sufficiently in his health while it lasted, but the truth is, it had at times offended her. She had, during his interregnum of health, seen him tramp heavy-footed across a field of clover and she had recalled on that occasion how, while he was ill, he had called out one day with every symptom of physical anguish upon seeing a picture which portrayed children at play in a field of daisies.

"*Oh, Mutterchen, Mutterchen,*" he cried. "Their backs, their poor, poor backs. See how the children have broken them." And he had pointed to some flowers at the edge of the meadow which lay supine and wilted with crushed and broken stems.

This refinement of feeling was coming back to him. One

day, when she removed some withered roses from a vase, he begged her to wrap the roses in tissue-paper before consigning them to the garbage pail.

And the weak, foolish, adoring woman could have wept with joy. She reflected that since Epictetus was all-wise—witness Guido's ruthless march across the wild flowers while in health and security—this relapse, demonstrating human vulnerability and the instability of even the most ordinary of life's blessings, such as health, must arrest forever the coarsening process of his spiritual life. When he regained his health, health would stiffen his stamina. That was well. But strength can be fine as well as brutal or indifferent, and she who had known Guido as the most exquisite of mortals could not bear to think of him as becoming coarsened in fiber.

Besides, imperfect health has its compensations. It may impede one's destiny, if one happens to have one. She was not certain how his spiritual organism would react when the clarion-call of life sounded in his ears. None too robust health may act as a brake upon natural inclinations, nor was this casting a slur on his proclivities. What she feared was not sordid selfishness, but an altruism, all too heedless of self.

In brief, she desired her boy to possess every fineness of instinct, and every desire to carry this fineness into execution. But she did not desire that execution to be accomplished to his own material detriment. She wished him to be a negative Sir Galahad. There was the rub! In her love for the boy she was the incarnation of selfishness.

Frau Ursula hoped that the compensatory silver lining of this new cloud which had descended upon them would be the cessation of Guido's Russian lessons. But when she suggested this, Guido became so agitated, and entreated her so earnestly not to deprive him of the entertainment which he derived from Dobronov's lessons, that she had not the heart to deny him.

A great friendship had grown up between Dobronov and Guido. Sergius Ivanovich treated Guido as if they were of exactly the same age. He initiated the lad into his religious difficulties, and the condition of Dobronov's soul became an intensely interesting subject to Guido. He took

it quite as seriously as Dobronov did himself. He understood thoroughly that the soul of Sergius Ivanovich was somewhat different in fiber and in mechanism from other people's souls.

Dobronov, after all, had rejected classification as a Baptist. His ancient prejudice against an ordained ministry had been too much for him. Moreover, he disapproved of baptism in a tank in a church. A true imitation of the methods of Jesus called for immersion in a stream. It was pointed out to him that the climate of the Northern States was prohibitive of such a practice. Whereat Dobronov exploded like a torpedo. Time-servers, climatic epicureans, selfish conservers of physical health! What if folks did catch their death of cold through being immersed in the icy waters of midwinter? The more happy they to be translated to heaven so speedily after being washed in the waters of belief. Decidedly, he would not be hall-marked a Baptist!

Otto remained with the Hausers all summer. He had, perhaps, in the penance which his contrition sought to impose, gone a little beyond his own or any normal boy's spiritual depth. Being thoroughly healthy both in body and mind, he could hardly be expected to keep his resolution never to laugh again, even if Guido had not absolved him from that foolish vow as soon as it was made. It was hard at first to get him to go outdoors to play with other boys. Guido finally cajoled him into it by telling him, in boy's jargon, that his mind was running stale from lack of friction with other juvenile mentalities, allowing him to infer that his companionship was not as stimulating as it had been of yore. After that the obedient Otto went out to play with other boys every day, but faithfully every morning, every evening and every afternoon, he sat with Guido for an hour at a time.

"Damon and Pythias," said Hauser to his wife, one day, after watching the two boys together. He was behaving very well to Guido. He remembered to bring him home his favorite newspaper every evening and every Saturday night brought each of the boys a box of candy and a new book for Guido. But when his wife attempted to thank him, he rebuffed her and went out of the room.

It is hard to say what would have become of Guido

without Otto' staunch friendship, for Guido was worse off than in any previous round of illness. For no protracted period, not even after an operation, had he been unable to stir in bed. But now his body, confined in the rigid inflexible plaster, was forced to remain in an immovable position day after day and night after night. The summer was exceptionally warm. Through one agonizing week mercury never fell below ninety in Guido's room. After the sun was down, his mother and Mrs. Thornton carried him out upon the small porch, where he might get at least a breath of air.

"The doctor is coming from New York next week to take off the plaster," Frau Ursula told Guido one day late in August.

"Then I suppose he'll begin burning my back again," said Guido. "Never mind, Mother. I'd rather have him burn my back every day in the week than be compressed in this glove-fitting harness of earthenware."

The glove-fitting harness was removed the following week. The Doctor refused to hazard a judgment on Guido's condition until another ten days should have elapsed. The suspense of these last days, when the boy's fate hung in the balance, wore a cruelly jagged edge which slashed and cut at the mother's heart-strings as nothing had done before.

"Dear Madam," said Dr. Erbach, after the final examination, "do not look so doleful. The boy can walk, as you saw for yourself. But—but——"

"Tell me quickly," quavered the tortured woman.

"Things might be infinitely worse. He is going to be able to go about his business like the rest of us. But he will have to be very, very careful for many years to come. He must not skip rope. He must not jerk himself about. He must not ride in any but the smoothest-running vehicles. He must not run. He must not dance. Calisthenics, excepting such exercises as I will explain to you, are, of course, out the question. In half a year I want to see him again."

Frau Ursula continued to question Dr. Erbach. He answered evasively. Finally, frowning, he said:

"I have told you all I know. Even a doctor is not omniscient. After his adolescence is passed he may become

quite strong and well. But I do not predict that he will become strong. To do so might be to raise false hopes. But he will not be deformed. And he is able to walk. Be satisfied with that."

She could get him to say no more.

His bill came with amazing celerity. Frau Ursula was not a poor woman and she was accustomed to heavy disbursements for doctors and nurses and medicines. But the bill which Dr. Erbach sent staggered her. It was so vast that it made her feel retrospectively that she had not paid sufficient homage to a man capable of and justified in sending a bill of such heroic dimensions.

She was still gazing at the bill in fascinated astonishment when Hauser came into the room and, looking over her shoulder, glimpsed the bill. What he saw made him whistle.

"Whew," he said, "but that's steep. Look here, you'd better let me take care of that for you."

"Indeed not," Frau Ursula replied. "You've returned my original loan—I can pay the bill out of that and invest the rest, or I can use some of the interest of Guido's money."

Frau Ursula had never told Hauser the exact extent of Guido's fortune. In the early days of her marriage some defensive instinct had held her silent. Later, when convinced of his financial dependability, she had been ashamed to let him know that she had mistrusted him—or not trusted him entirely—at first.

He misinterpreted her refusal to allow him to shoulder the bill.

"You don't wish me to pay a bill incurred for Guido, is that it?" he demanded, angrily. His quick transitions from mildness to anger, from amiability to irony or brutality, remained a mystery to her.

Her surprise at his sudden change of tone was so great that she did not reply.

"So that's it," he said, bitterly. Then, abruptly, hatefully: "I won't be home until late. Perhaps not at all."

"Not at all?" Frau Ursula questioned, stupid with astonishment. He never remained away from home unless he went on a business trip.

"Have you a right to object?"

"No, I suppose not," said Frau Ursula, calmly, not wishing to excite him further.

"Ah! If you'd said you had the right, perhaps you'd have it," he snarled. "Good-night. I'll be home. I had no intention in the world of staying out late."

The door slammed behind him with an impact that shook the house.

Frau Ursula, a little shaken by the suddenness of this domestic earthquake, dropped the bill on the floor of the dining-room, where the eruption had taken place. There Guido found it, and stood staring in fright at the heart-breaking sum. He, too, had a very inadequate notion of the fortune owned by himself and by his mother.

It seemed to the little lad that annihilation threatened the house of Hauser in view of such a catastrophic bill. He was so absorbed in it that he did not hear his mother enter the room.

"Guido, what have you there?"

"*Mutterchen*, this is terrible. And all on my account. How ever will you pay it?"

"Guido, there is lots of money in the bank. Don't worry, dear. Besides, it need not be paid all at once."

But the cud of anxiety which he had been chewing was not so easily relinquished. His supple mind was harking back to the tales of her childhood with which she had been wont to enliven his bed-ridden days. Memory, vicariously, was conjuring visions of splendor, of luxury militant, of wealth fabulous and inexhaustible. Juxtaposed to this was the financial disaster which had now descended upon the Hauser household—according to his notion.

"*Ach, Mutterchen*," he said, absorbed entirely in the financial quicksands in which he fancied his mother struggling, "*Ach, Mutterchen*, why did you ever leave Germany? There you were rich——"

A change, terrible in its swift intensity, convulsed Frau Ursula's face. For a moment she seemed like a woman frozen by supermundane blasts of frost. When she breathed again stark horror was written in her eyes and painted on her face. Between the horror rippled indignation and courage implacable.

She had, for the nonce, forgotten all about the Synthetic Experiment, and the Attitude of No-Bias.

"Guido," she said in a voice of ferrous gentleness, "do not make me regret that I told you those stories of a childhood happily passed in Germany. Every contented childhood, in retrospection, seems a fairyland if for no other reason than that it has become as unattainable as the real fairyland in which exists the Fountain of Youth or King Midas.

"Never, dear boy, let me hear you utter so wicked a wish again."

Guido opened his eyes wide in astonishment. Why was his *Mutterchen* thus offended? Wicked! A hard word to apply to his benevolent desire to see her relieved of all her financial worries.

✓ "Once before, Guido," she continued, "I entreated you always to remember that you are a native-born American. It seems I did not speak with sufficient emphasis. Try and comprehend, Guido, all that this country—*your* country—stands for. I say 'try' advisedly, Guido, for you are too young to understand *just* how vastly superior our country is to every other country in the world. At present you must take my word for it. You must take my word for it also when I tell you that I who enjoyed the highest social position abroad have never, not in the hour of darkest trouble, regretted that I cast aside all the advantages which my birth gave me, for in exchanging them for American citizenship I became a free woman. You, *mein kleiner Guido*, who were born free and bred free, have not the remotest idea of what it means to be unfree, to lead a narrow, cramped, confined inner life. No material well-being, no appanage of rank can assuage the pain that accrues to that bitter knowledge.

"There are so many things I have not told you about the life I left behind me," she continued. "Perhaps I was wrong to dwell on the pleasant aspect of my childhood, and to repress the tragic aspect of my maturity. But you were too young, Guido, you still are too young to be told of certain things. They must wait a little longer before I tell you of them.

"But there is one thing, Guido, which I can say to you now and which you are not too young to understand. You have read American history both in school and while in bed. You adore Washington, you idolize Lincoln.

Besides those names all the insignia of rank with which the potentates of Europe bedeck themselves, seem petty, seem cheap and tawdry, seem like the trappings of a pantomime or a comic opera.

"Have you ever asked yourself what made those men so great? Washington was an aristocrat, one of the landed gentry. Lincoln was a son of the soil, a man of the common people. They differed in many qualities. Wherein did they meet? What attributes did they share?"

She came to a full stop, indicating thereby that the question was not a rhetorical one. Guido remained silent, feeling ashamed and culpable. He knew not what to reply. She adjured him to resort to analysis and not to be afraid to let his wits go off on an unusual tack. The unblazed trail, she said, was the trail most tenderly cherished by free men the world over. Forest primeval and jungle might be darkling and forbidding, but men whose souls were the souls of free men feared nought but God alone. Such was the Creed of Democracy.

At that the child cried out that he would give her the desired answer. Then he paused, overcome with fright at having charted so momentous a sea alone.

"Well?" Frau Ursula demanded, expectantly.

"It's because of what they thought was right," Guido said. "It's because both Washington and Lincoln thought that everybody has rights, not only those who are born rich and with titles."

"That's it, Guido. They loved humanity, they and many others who helped them in their great work. Justice and kindness, kindness and justice—those are the watchwords of America, and all who confess to these ideals are true Americans whether they were born in America or in Europe. My little boy has the great privilege of being American-born. He must never be less than a true American. Better than that he can never be. And every day of his life he must be thankful that he is what he is."

"I will never forget, Mother, never."

The child was in a state of almost religious exaltation. And suddenly Frau Ursula remembered the Synthesis and the Experiment, and Guido's Destiny, and the Spirit of No-Bias.

"I don't care," she said defiantly to herself. "I don't

care. If there is a bias in being a good American, then the Experiment will have to take its chances."

Of all the heterogeneous lessons in which Guido's childhood abounded, this was the lesson which became most closely intertwined with his personality. It became part of himself, so closely did he hug it to his heart. The sense of it abode with him always. As he grew older, through all his other loves—his joy in nature, his enthusiasm for the English language and for English literature, his delight in American customs, habits, breeding—ran his sober love of country.

His mother's fervent plea resulted in his thoroughgoing Americanization.

And the effect of this upon the Synthetic Experiment?
We shall see.

Part II
YOUTH

CHAPTER I

1914

SPRING, the bride of Phoenix, entered upon her nineteen hundred and fourteen incarnation garbed in her customary tender splendor. Her daintiness of attire gave no sign that the sad distinction would attach to her of being the last spring which some half a million young men would see—a half-million young men constituting the flower of France's, England's, Belgium's and Germany's youth.

Spring, nineteen hundred and fourteen, was of particular interest to Guido, for it was the season which, if all went well, would witness his school education nicely rounded off by a public presentation of a diploma. After that there would follow four years at college.

Guido and Stan were engineers-elect. Close at hand was the Anasquoit College of Technology, quite the finest institution of its kind in the United States, in spite of the fact that it reared its battlemented front—it was built to resemble a medieval castle—in the lazy, hazy atmosphere of Anasquoit.

The *Deutsch-Amerikanische Realschule* dispensed a scholarship to the graduate obtaining the highest average percentage. The scholarship provided for the entire four years' course at the Anasquoit College.

Guido, all through the academic classes, which afforded the equivalent of a public high school training, had ranked first, with Otto as a close second. During one term only had Otto outstripped him. Guido had been in bad health during that term and had not been able to keep abreast of the laboratory work in chemistry.

"Of course," said Egon von Dammer one day as Guido, Otto, Stan and Egon were walking home together, "one of you two fellows is going to get the scholarship. The rest of us are out of the running. You, Guido, or Otto. So long, boys!"

Guido and Otto stole guilty glances at each other.

Neither relished the idea of wresting the scholarship from his best friend.

"What the devil made von Dammer say that?" said Stan, after Egon had left them.

"Well, why shouldn't he say it?" said Otto. "It's the truth. No, it's not the entire truth. Guido is going to win out as a matter of course."

Guido went home in an unhappy frame of mind. Egon's words forced him to face an issue which he was most unwilling to face. Otto's father had failed in business some five years ago and the Baumgartens were having a hard time of it. They had sold their cottage in the mountains and their modest little home in Bismarck Street in order to meet Mr. Baumgarten's business obligations. Ponderous he was, and egoistic and dictatorial, but honest withal.

For Guido, who had a fortune of his own, as he was now aware, the scholarship spelled glory. For Otto, in addition to glory, it held the substantial benefit of an education, and failing to win the shadow he would in all probability be forced to forego the substance as well.

Otto who, as a rule, did not know the complexion of reticence concerning his own affairs where Guido was concerned, had, since his father's failure and particularly during the past year, maintained a curious silence concerning his plans following graduation from the *Realschule*.

Guido went home and shut himself in his own room to thrash out the situation. He wished that he might have confided in his mother, but, how could he? without appearing an insufferable prig. There were, he observed, conditions and occurrences in life which could not be handled in conversation with decency. This was one of them. After the Sacrifice, perhaps, to assuage his mother's wounded pride, he might tell her. He *might*. He was not at all sure that he *would*.

As to the Sacrifice itself, what else in heaven's name was there to do? Otto, if conditions had been reversed, would have done the same for him.

Four hours were devoted to each study at the final examinations. The pupils were furnished with pencil, pen and ink, with yellow and white pads. The rough working out of the problems or answers was done upon the yellow

pads, as upon a loose-leaf diary, and the work was then copied from this *Kladde* upon the white pad. No erasures were permitted either upon the yellow or the white paper.

Guido had no intention of depreciating his standing more than was necessary to secure Otto the scholarship. It devolved upon him, therefore, after working out the Answers to the Question Sheet upon the yellow paper, to introduce a sufficient number of errors in transferring the work to the white paper to lower his usual standing by from four to five per cent. It was a delicate operation, and Guido, after mature reflection, decided that the amputation of percentages must be performed upon History and Literature, studies in which he was particularly strong and in which, therefore, he ran no risk whatever of falling below the percentage required in each individual study.

He felt very heroic—in more ways than one—as, on the days of the History and Literature Test, he performed the singular task he had set himself. He was blissfully unaware of the fact that he was engaged in perpetrating a piece of knavery. Self-interest plays so great a part in the struggle for existence that the heroism of acting in contradiction to its dictates is usually considered tantamount to wiping all minor offenses off the slate, which is only a different way of saying that the Golden Rule either embraces or supersedes all subsidiary branches of the ethical code.

Guido worked cannily and figured that he had brought his rating down from ninety-seven, his last average, to ninety-two. So he had. But he grew pale with sudden emotion when, a week later, the *Herr Direktor* read the report of the graduating class's work. The first name to be read was Egon's, who had passed with ninety-four per cent. Why had not Otto's name preceded Egon's? Guido had a horrid premonition of what had happened.

"Guido von Estritz," again announced the principal's voice, ninety-three and a half. Otto Baumgarten ninety-two."

Otto below Egon! Otto below himself! For one moment everything went black before Guido's eyes, then he found himself staring stupidly at Otto, but Otto was as white and as stupid-looking as himself.

As soon as discipline was relaxed, Otto left his seat and came over to Guido.

"What happened, Guido?" he asked. "You never fell below ninety-seven before. How did it happen?"

Otto's trembling underlip was more illuminating than words. Guido saw a great light. He accused Otto outright of having committed the juggling of which he himself had been guilty. Otto grew red, stuttered, mumbled and finally confessed. He had been afraid, he said, that Chemistry, which was Guido's Achilles' Heel, would lose him the scholarship, to which, Otto felt, Guido was overwhelmingly entitled in view of his brilliant work throughout the year. He had, therefore, as his give-away underlip had already informed Guido, played Damon to Guido's Pythias.

Guido burst into Homeric laughter while Otto, his confession made, wept unashamedly. Later Guido would see the pity and the beauty of the Sacrifice which, through being mutual, had neutralized itself, and Otto would see the humor. But for the moment Guido laughed and Otto wept.

About a week later Egon von Dammer called to see Guido. After a sojourn of eight years in America, Egon's father found that his business recalled him to Germany. Egon was genuinely sorry to leave the United States—at least he said so—but his father brooked no opposition. An old bachelor uncle had died, and a fortune of some magnitude was involved. In brief, Egon would be unable to avail himself of the scholarship into which he had fallen so unexpectedly. He had, therefore, made a pilgrimage to the house of the *Herr Direktor*, and had asked him whether the scholarship might not be transferred to a friend of his own choice. The *Herr Direktor* had been very diffident. Such a thing had never been done before. Egon had pressed his suit, naming Guido as the beneficiary. Still the *Herr Direktor* remained obdurate. Thereupon Egon confided to him a suspicion which had graually been shaping itself in his mind. The *Herr Direktor* became more tractable, the suspicion seemed so very plausible.

Then the examination papers of Guido and Otto were produced, and the comparison of the yellow and white sheets had shown that Egon's suspicions had been well

found. Guido had relied upon it that the *Kladde* would not be compared with the clean work upon the white sheets. It was generally understood that the handing in of the yellow sheets along with the white was a mere matter of form. Otto had argued in similar fashion. Guido, judged by the work on the *Kladde*, had passed at 98½, an unprecedented average in the annals of the *Realschule*. Otto had fallen only one-half of one per cent below his friend's ratio. The *Herr Direktor* was delighted. He rubbed his hands and cackled joyfully. The inexplicable backsliding of the two prize pupils of his school had irked him not a little. He said kind things about boys capable of so disinterested a friendship, and indulged in anything but kind comments on the teachers who had allowed themselves to be imposed upon in so bare-faced a way. He congratulated Egon upon his perspicacity, and delegated him to inform Guido officially that he had come into his own.

Guido was both pleased and displeased. He thanked Egon warmly, said he had acted nobly, but—there was Otto in as bad a plight as before. He, Otto, had spoken of taking a stenographic position for the summer, or for a full year, in order to pay his way through college for the same period. It would be a shame to make him lose a year's time at hack work.

The two boys took counsel together and together ventured to lay their difficulty—or Otto's—before the *Herr Direktor*. But the *Herr Direktor* was not to be trifled with a second time. What were they asking *him* to do? Juggle percentages as they had juggled answers? He became floridly indignant and told them to go to their several homes and repent of their dishonest ways.

Otto took the news magnificently. He congratulated Guido upon his good luck in being found out and felicitated Egon upon his generosity, and wrung the hands of his friends so forcibly that both Guido and Egon were almost prostrated with pain, for Otto had developed the stature and the strength of a giant. He entreated his friends not to worry on his score. What? Allow either of them to help him with money? Not to be thought of. He had the offer of two positions for the summer. One was a stenographic job at twenty per; the other a job as helper

in a machine shop at ten per. He expected to start the following Monday in the clerical position.

Stan, when the boys told him the story, made no comment whatever. He stretched out his handsome self at full length, leisurely lighted his pipe, and very spectacularly said nothing.

"Wasn't it fine of Egon?" Guido demanded, determined to wring a word of praise from Stan.

"The question before the house is this," said Stan, somberly. "If Egon's father had not decided upon this mysterious European trip, would Egon or would he not have handed back what wasn't 'his'n?'"

"You're never fair to Egon?" said Guido, disgustedly.

"Well," said Stan, lazily, "I don't want you to feel, Guy, that you're under obligations to Dutch because he disgorged what he'd no right to anyhow. Hope he'll never come back from the other side of the big pond, I'm sure."

The conversation was cut short by Eddie Erdman's arrival. The boys were celebrating the happy outcome of the Egon-Guido-Otto imbroglio in Guido's rooms. Henry Foerster slipped in as silently as always in the wake of Eddie's broad shadow.

"Well, Son of Laconia," said Stan, how are you going to earn your livelihood now you are out of the woods?"

"Law," said the laconic one, and all stared in amazement. Law was the very last profession they would have suspected Henry of embracing. No one ever ventured to tease Henry, however, and they all turned to Eddie.

"Well, Rhino, it's the vaudeville stage for yours, I'm thinking?" Stan interrogated.

"Nix on the vaudeville stage," said Eddie. "Me wants to live and die and be buried in this sleepy old burg. For why? Because I don't like traveling, for one thing. For another, my brilliant career was all mapped out for me over a year ago."

The boys clamored noisily to be let into the secret.

"Going to be a second Pierpont Morgan? Perhaps you're a relative of the Astorbilts? Is John D. going to let you in on the ground floor?" They besieged him with questions, teasing him unmercifully, as usual.

"Look here," said Eddie, "I haven't an uncle in Wall Street, but I have an aunt who has the smartest millinery

shop on Bismarck Street, corner of Walnut. She put my *grosser Bruder* through his medical course, you know."

"Don't tell me you're going to be a saw-bones, too?" yelled Stan.

"Not on your tintype, son. One saw-bones in the fambly is enough. Thanks awfully for nothing. I love the ladies. God bless 'em. I'd never have the heart to put the dear pretty things on the table and slice away at their poor ailing innards. I'd rather sit the cunnin' little critters in front of a table, and see 'em try on pretty hats."

"Eddie!" the boys roared in unison. They thought it one of the Rhino's jokes.

"Sure as my name is Fatty the Rhino. I'm going into the millinery business with my old *Tante*. For over a year I've been trimming her best bonnets for her, and she tells me they've sold like hot cakes."

An uproar arose. It was Bedlam let loose. They clapped their hands, they stamped upon the floor, they caterwauled. Suddenly something in Eddie's face informed them that he was not stringing them, and their hilarity subsided spasmodically.

"Now, boys," said Eddie, "I'm a good sport. I've served as a butt for you fellows all my life and I didn't mind and I don't mind, but there is one thing you must not tease me about. You to your work, I to mine. A pretty hat on a plain face may do as much to make history or more—for man is born of woman—than the finest railroad bridge or cantilever which one of you chaps may devise. So 'ware. Do not bay me or I'll bite."

This sobered the others. They were considerably amazed by this defiant unfurling of Eddie's philosophy—they had been so used to seeing in him only the good-natured clown. They had always liked Eddie; now, when they had been about to steep their liking for him in contempt because he had shamelessly announced his intention of embracing a business both effeminate and sumptuary, he had pulled them up sharply, and lo! they respected him.

Several minutes elapsed before they returned to their former hilarity. Coming manhood had cast its shadow before, and the adumbration had sobered them.

CHAPTER II

GUIDO and Otto lay in the long, tangled grass of a meadow deliciously sheltered by weeping willows and fanned by breezes cooled by a tiny, brawling brook which, like a small dog, racketed along with an effusion wholly incommensurate with its size.

They lay in a position which no self-respecting sculptor would have cared to perpetuate. They lay not gently recumbent, with an elbow for a prop or resting gracefully upon one hand, but prone upon their stomachs. An open book lay within the angle of vision of each. Otto was assiduously applying himself to a German translation of "The Taming of the Shrew."

Guido was not reading. He was pursuing the most pleasant of all occupations—he was day-dreaming. He was lapped in that drowsy content which comes from dallying in the borderland that lies between thought and emotion. He was ruminating—if the unformulated ghosts of thought which flitted like butterflies in and out of his consciousness may be designated by so specific a term—upon the great mystery of race.

He had awakened that morning teased and yet pleased by the dictum, read he could not remember where, that he who commands more than one language possesses more than one soul.

He felt that that was true. Days there were when, on awakening, dreamy, inchoate and mysterious splendors seemed to beckon him on into a wilderness which had neither a material beginning nor an end, which was populated by weird phantoms that took no thought of material things, that cared not whether they ate or drank or slept, that sacrificed everything for an idea and were happy in making the sacrifice. On such mornings he was not content until he had read a page in some Russian book, Pushkin or Tolstoy preferably, and called that part of his ego his Russian dream-self, communicated to him, as he thought,

by all the fantastic sense and nonsense with which it was Dobronov's habit to regale him. He had no notion that his dream-self was not an acquisition but a heritage.

Then, again, there were days when he fluctuated between fatuous sentimentality and intensely utilitarian purpose, when he felt that to possess those attributes was to possess superlative virtue. On such days he felt that his German blood was rampant in his veins, and a page of Goethe or Schiller or Fulda were required to shake him back into everyday life.

Then there were days when he awoke normally, happily, sunnily without any of these strange, self-conscious yearnings, when he was humbly content to be alive, eager to perform his tasks for the day, and when morbid self-analysis had no part in him. On such days he could no more have read Russian or German to advantage than he could have swum across the Hudson. On these, his natural days, he would steal an hour from school-work before going to bed, and read an act or two of Shakespeare, or an essay by Emerson, or a few pages from Macaulay.

Guido, at sixteen, was a Shakespeare devotee as he had been a Schiller enthusiast at eleven. On some such days, balmy spring days, when the breath of rejuvenation passed through the air like a hallelujah, or soft mellow autumn days which seemed prophetic of immortality in their delicious prolongation of summer, the majestic rhythm of the Shakespearian blank verse—or Marlowe's—seemed to move through his body and soul like a song without words, for detached from the words in which it moved, which veiled it but failed to obscure its sublimity, it seemed a corporeal thing, a thing holy and beautiful like a sanctuary or a shrine; and it seemed to enter his blood, and to make that move in unison with it and sing such songs as mortal ear never heard.

Guido was happiest on these days, which, rightly or wrongly, he called his American days. The self which came to the surface then was real, his true self, he felt certain. And yet he would not have discarded either of his subsidiary selves if it had lain in his power to do so. Such is the cohesive force that binds us to every current inhering in us.

Otto, untroubled by any leanings toward the mystic,

wholly unimaginative and knowing nothing of a multiple personality, was completely immersed in his German translation of Shakespeare.

"Otto," said Guido.

"Well?"

"Otto, why in heaven's name don't you read Shakespeare in English?"

"Why should I?"

"For one thing because the German version, though excellent, is inaccurate. '*Wilderspenstige*' is a rotten equivalent of 'Shrew.'"

Otto scowled.

"It suits me," he said. "I like '*Wilderspenstige*' better than 'Shrew.' The fault is with the original, not with the translation."

Guido roared out his delight in Otto's unconscious racial and individual egoism. He was much too contented at the moment to quarrel with anyone.

"What would you say if I read Schiller in English?" Guido resumed.

"I'd say it was none of my confounded business if you choose to make a silly ass of yourself."

Guido chuckled gleefully.

"You would," he said, "like fun. You'd read me a lecture on the necessity of not neglecting the '*Muttersprache*.'"

Otto grinned.

"If you know just what I'd do why do you ask me?" he inquired. "And now shut up. I want to read."

"I'd like you to try and get my point of view," said Guido.

"Why don't you have a try at mine?" Otto rejoined.

"See how much nicer I am than you," said Guido, teasingly. "Here is a book I would not have read in English for worlds." And he lightly tossed a small volume in a typically neat German binding across to Otto.

Otto picked it up and whistled.

"*Bei Kaiser's*," he read. "Where did you get it? Any good?"

"Egon. Yep. Fine."

"Well," said Otto, "that at least is a point on which we agree. We both admire the Kaiser."

"I sure do," said Guido, contentedly. He rolled over on his back and, hands clasped under his head, regarded the fragments of sky visible through the heavy leafage of the maple under which they were lying. Otto went back to his reading, but in a few moments he announced:

"I'm tired of reading. Let's go and see if the dancing has begun."

Guido laughed clandestinely. He had not desired to go to this—their last—school-picnic, which, since he durst neither row, nor dance, nor jump hurdles nor in any way exert himself, was a continuous mortification of the flesh. But Otto had plead so eloquently, adducing so many plausible reasons why Guido should selfishly desire to go, that Guido, a little in the dark as to Otto's true motives, had finally consented.

The next day Guido had seen a great light. Otto was in love. Otto, walking at Elschen Marlow's side, was blind to all beside. Any other boy Guido would have chaffed about his infatuation, but not Otto. Guido divined Otto's psychology as clearly as if it had been his own, more so, perhaps; for Guido was an unusually keen observer and Otto, rough, sensitive, good-hearted, opinionated, honest, loyal Otto was simplicity itself.

Otto was that rarity, a man—or a boy—with a monogamic soul. He would make the gift of his love once and once only. In making it there would be no temporizing, no compromising, no half-way measures. For Otto love meant a complete surrender of affection and loyalty. Thus royally, also, had he given his friendship. He worshiped Guido with a sort of fierce devotion, a devotion which exhausted itself upon Guido, leaving nothing for other friends. Guido often wondered at the strange diffidence which Otto manifested toward their mutual friends. He was hail-fellow-well-met with everybody, but Guido absorbed his entire capacity for friendship. Guido might have done for any other needy friend what he did for Otto—try to underpass him—but Otto would have made that sacrifice for none but for Guido. Otto, German to the backbone, required a strong personal motive for any sacrifice. Guido, in whom Russian mysticism was inter-bound with the more masculine and masterful idealism which had informed the *Achtundvierziger* in their gallant

but hopeless fight for liberty, had slipped into an entirely unconscious alignment with the higher altruism of which America is the most uncompromising and sincerest exponent. But every virtue, like every medal, has an obverse side. Guido, with a mania for types which was partly human and partly literary, desired many friends and made friends easily and kept them too—many friends, let it be understood, of both sexes. That he loved Otto and Elschen best did not keep him from being excellent friends with half a dozen other boys and girls, nor did his affection for Otto and Elschen blind him to their peculiarities of character. And, lastly, Guido was not a born monogamist like Otto. He was too sensitive to beauty, too impressionable, too greatly fascinated by types.

The boys, on reaching the dancing pavilion, found that the orchestra had just arrived. Amid the cacaphony engendered by instruments in process of attunement, the young people were pairing off.

Elschen Marlow was seated quite alone, near her father.

Herr Pastor Marlow was a man of giant stature, with a fine head cast in a mold reminiscent of feudal Germany and of the age of Albrecht Duerer. It was, perhaps, a trifle too massive to be considered beautiful when judged by modern standards. But its impressiveness was lost on none. He was an intensely warm-hearted, human, lovable man and his parishioners, young and old alike, idolized him.

The *Herr Pastor* was engaged in entertaining two of the pillars of his church, and merely nodded to the boys, with a hearty, interpolated "*Guten Tag, Jungens,*" as they passed him.

Otto was a communicant of his church. Guido, for a short time had gone with Otto to Sunday school, but he had tired of it and had asked his mother to be allowed to stop going. It had been a severe blow to Frau Ursula. Dr. Koenig had chuckled over her a little, but mindful of her disappointment, had not chuckled overmuch.

Elschen, the picture of virginal sweetness and purity, hands clasped in lap, greeted the boys with demure shyness. She retained all the old-world, cloistral charm which in her childhood had set her apart as a creature unique and undescribably precious. Hers was the charm

of a flower which had blossomed in a walled-in, brick-walked garden, secure from vulgar eyes, but flooded with sunlight and open to the blue sky. She was the incarnation of a past generation's conception or maidenlikeness—sincere, demure, too innocent for coquetry and as direct and as simple as a child or a savage.

"Well, Elschen," Otto said in German, "I hope you have saved us one or two dances."

Otto's opening sentences in addressing Elschen always included Guido. He seemed to derive an intense comfort from this inclusion of Guido, just as in approaching Elschen he always required his friend's supporting presence. A little later, when conversation was well under way, Guido was expected to eliminate himself, which, Guido, with the greatest complacency, invariably did.

"I have not disposed of any of my dances," Elschen replied, in her sweet, girlish staccato. "I do not like to dance with a lot of different boys the way some girls do."

"But you won't mind dancing with me, will you, Elschen?" Otto inquired, anxiously.

"Oh, no. Do you not see? I saved all my dances, all of them, for you and for Guido."

As the young girl pronounced Guido's name, she lifted her eyes to his face. The beautiful blue eyes were swimming in a humid mist, but not knowing that there was anything to hide, she made no effort to conceal their message.

Guido caught sight of Otto's face and the pain mirrored there, and said, hastily:

"Elschen, it's awfully sweet of you. But you know I cannot dance—doctor's orders—I do not even know how."

Elschen, innocent, direct, artless child, replied:

"Sometimes a boy and a girl sit out a dance and talk."

"Ah!" Poor Guido was hard set to. But another glance at Otto's face made him marshal his wits for a supreme effort. He said, quickly:

"Yes, of course. But you are so fond of dancing, Elschen, and so is Otto, that it would be very selfish of me to let you sit out a dance with me. I couldn't think of it." He rattled on, fearful lest Elschen compromise herself further. "So I'm going to leave you two together

to have a good time by yourself, and I'll go walk off my disgust so as not to play dog in the manger."

Lifting his hat, he hastily walked away.

A little further on he stopped to chat with Mrs. Thornton, now Mrs. Erdman, who to Guido's mind, had lost none of her exotic unhyphenated charm through her change in name. He adored her and her slim and sprightly elegance and tender soft ways as much as ever.

She saw him first and called to him:

"Foster-son! Are you trying to cut me? You sha'n't succeed."

"Mrs. Thornton, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Erdman—I render a double apology for the double break. How's my foster brother?"

He bent toward the two-year-old scion of the house of Erdman and made as to lift the child. Mrs. Erdman gently resisted him.

"He's much too heavy," she said, in an undertone. "Your back!"

"Bother my back," said Guido crossly. "You have no idea what nuisance it is to forever think about it."

"I'm afraid it would be more of a nuisance if you didn't," Mrs. Erdman replied, succinctly.

"Oh, I suppose so."

Guido played a few minutes with the baby, which was the prodigy of infant charm and intelligence that first-born children always are; then, as other friends claimed Mrs. Erdman, he bowed and left her.

He found a bench by the side of the stream and sat there the balance of the afternoon reading Macaulay's "Machiavelli." Macaulay's style exerted a tremendous fascination upon Guido, and he read on unmindful of the shadows which finally began to creep up from the banks of the stream. Suddenly he realized that it was getting late, very late. He closed the book with a sigh, and starting to his feet chose a circuitous route back to the pavilion the better to enjoy the glorious twilight which was succeeding a perfect day.

This roundabout way led past an old building usually referred to as the Castle. It had, in its day, been a very splendid mansion indeed. But now its gargoyles were crumbling, its cornices falling, its stones slipping, its roof

sagging, its coping dragging. The large terrace which ran along its front was still tolerably intact, although the fountain which stood in the center of its tessellated pavement had long since run dry.

The mansion was not occupied. The lower floor had been closed off long ago and was entirely out of repair, but the main room in the second story was still open to the public. It had constituted the ancient glory of the building and was, indeed, the reason why the mansion had not been pulled down long ago.

This room, which occupied virtually the entire length and breadth of the building, since only the stairway and a small hat and cloak-room encroached upon its area, was the library.

It was a room that suggested high ideals, fine and splendid thinking and heroic deeds. All the woodwork in the room and the furniture as well consisted of hand-carved black walnut, the wood which had its heyday in the Victorian era and which has fallen into disuse among furniture makers for no other reason than that it is not obtainable at the present time. The chair and divans were upholstered in cream-colored brocade and the hangings matched the chairs.

But the really noteworthy feature of the room, the feature which had made the Castle famous throughout the country, was the arrangement of all it contained—books, furniture, paintings, statuary and old tapestries. The bookcases were surmounted by the busts of the authors whose works reposed in the shelves beneath, and these effigies were marble copies in miniature of portrait busts made by famous sculptors. This collection of statuary was said to be unique. A gallery ran above the first tier of bookcases and statuary, commanding access to a second relay of authors, and above the second tier beautiful old tapestries, Persian rugs, banners and flags, alternating with enormous canvases were outspread against the walls.

Guido loved the beautiful old room with its faded hangings and wonderful old furniture and he chid himself now for having neglected to visit it to-day.

He leaned against the enormous trunk of a three-century-old English elm, and regarded the old mansion, glorying in its elusive charm and its haunting loveliness.

There was to him something infinitely pathetic in all this decaying splendor. He thought of the lives that had been spent under the now senile roof, of the children who had played on the spacious terrace and about the fountain which had now run dry. He thought of those same children, grown to man and womanhood, and how they had danced and made merry in the Library, turned into a ball-room on such occasions. He thought of the births and the marriages and the deaths which had taken place in those rooms, and he was seized with a species of vicarious nostalgia in which all the sorrows, joys, hopes, disappointments and anxieties of those alien lives, of which he knew nothing, seemed to merge and cry for utterance.

He changed from one foot to the other, and then—all his faculties congealed into the one sense of hearing.

He thought that he had heard a voice, a young, agreeable, feminine voice, calling. For a minute he thought that he had been deceived and that some aural specter of the past had come to mock him. Then, clearly, poignantly and yet without a note of shrillness, the voice called once more out of the gathering dusk which enmeshed the Castle.

"If there is anyone under those trees, I wish he or she would come up on the terrace. I'm locked in and I can't get out."

There is something subtly stirring about an invisible voice, and this voice held the promise of youth, of refinement, of femininity; and, coming as it did out of the shadowed recesses of the huge pile of crumbling stone, it stimulated our hero's imagination quite uncommonly.

Repressing a hysterical desire to laugh, Guido obeyed the voice with alacrity. From the terrace he could glimpse the owner of the voice. She was standing at one of the tall, broad windows of the library. The cream-colored hangings had closed behind her, and drew upon themselves the sun's last fitful burst of glory, so that the girl was silhouetted as against a shining panel. She was radiant with youth and with health and such beauty as he had never looked upon before. Her image smote upon the boy's sense like a chord in the major key—triumphantly, exquisitely, brilliantly. Her vision had come to him like a bolt of lightning, like the rush of a cascade, like a burst of song from an unseen bird's throat. He saw presently,

when his vision cleared, that her hair was dark and her eyes were dark. She wore her hair parted above a low forehead, a mode which gave her narrow but exquisitely modeled face a madonna-like appearance. Her delicately coral-pink lips were arched, Cupid-fashion. Her skin was very white, her cheeks tinted like a blush-rose. It was a complexion most unusual to be paired with eyes and hair as dark as hers—for both were almost black—speaking of pure northern ancestry.

All these facts concerning the young lady who had summoned him to her assistance so unceremoniously—romantically, our hero termed it—Guido had absorbed as quickly and as unconsciously as the pores absorb moisture in bathing.

“What’s up?” he demanded, employing words which, as he was painfully aware, were horribly inadequate to the occasion. He was burning to recite Romeo’s farewell, though, of course, a farewell speech would neither be appropriate to the occasion nor desired by himself.

“I can’t get out,” said the girl, plaintively. “They’ve locked the door to the stairway and I’m afraid to risk jumping out of the window. It must be twenty feet at least, and the terrace looks hard.”

“I am afraid,” said Guido, “that, like Prince Arthur, you might have regretted that twenty-foot leap if you had risked it.”

The girl looked startled, almost frightened, but nothing could stop him now. The Shakespeare mood was upon him. He might die for it, but for sheer joy in the lines he must spout at least a few words from the “Great Immortal”:

“Ah me! My uncle’s spirit is in these stones,
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones.”

The girl’s amazement had given way to perplexity and uncertainty. For one moment Guido thought that she was a stranger to those lines, but her next words shattered that misconception.

“I think we’d better not have a Shakespeare recitation just now,” she said, nervously.

"No, of course not. Didn't you hear the five o'clock bell?"

"Of course I heard it. I'm not deaf. But I paid no attention to it. Of course I should have. Bells at five o'clock in a place like this are always an invitation to efface oneself as speedily as possible. The truth is—well—I was completely fascinated——"

She stopped, embarrassment visible in every feature.

"Fascinated by what?"

"Look here, I'll answer all questions later on. All you care to ask. But—won't you please try and get me out of this fortress now?"

"Fortress!" Guido laughed in appreciation of the word.

"Please hurry," said the girl. "A family of mice is playing tag right back of me and one skittish member of the family has twice mistaken my foot for a hurdle or a stile. I beg of you to make haste."

"I'll have you out of here in a jiffy," said Guido, and did not move. The magic that dwelt in that lovely face held him rooted to the spot. He felt that if he removed his eyes from the girl for one moment she would vanish away into nothing.

"There's a ladder at the side of the terrace," said the girl. "I think it's tall enough to reach this window. Perhaps you can carry it up here, and stand it up against the wall. I'm a gym girl, and I'll be able to manage nicely."

Guido went in search of the ladder and found it. It was an ordinary rung ladder which had been used by workmen during the day. Otto or Stan, or even Egon, could easily have lifted it and dragged it onto the terrace. He, however, could barely lift it three feet from the ground. A severe twinge in his back warned him against an imprudent exertion. He let the end of the ladder he had lifted drop with a sharp crack.

Crestfallen he returned to the terrace.

"I'm afraid I won't be able to manage it alone," he said.

The girl frowned. Twilight was deepening, but he could discern the expression of the lovely face and it was compact of disdain and disapproval.

"Perhaps, then," she said, and her voice was chill and distant, "if not asking too much, you could manage to go

to the pavilion and find my father. His name is Geddes, Professor Edward Geddes. Have him paged if necessary."

Guido blushed hotly. To be visited undeservedly with the contempt of this divine creature was a sort tribulation. His accursed back, of course, had won him her contempt. He controlled his emotion with difficulty, and said:

"I can do as you suggest, of course. But it will take me at least half an hour to go to the Pavilion, and find Professor Geddes and bring him back here. And it may take longer. It will take me only ten minutes to fetch the watchman from the Lodge. Will you not trust me to do that?"

The girl seemed considerably placated.

"I'll be very grateful to you for doing that," she said.

In less than ten minutes Guido had returned with the watchman, and prison doors had swung wide for Miss Geddes. Guido, in one corner of the terrace, had peeled a two-dollar bill, the smallest he had, from a comfortable roll of bills. As the watchman emerged from the door of the building and locked it, Guido deftly slipped it to him. The man touched his cap to him and thanked him. The girl had seen this by-play and again her manner and expression changed. She seemed to contract within herself, as if self-contraction would widen the distance between them as they walked silently through the dark woods into which shafts of moonlight were beginning to filter.

As they walked along she was saying to herself: "Wouldn't soil his delicate fingers with a smeary, smelly workingman's ladder. Or, perhaps he wanted me to know that he's well supplied with funds. As if I cared!" She was saying these unamiable things about Guido to herself, not because she believed them but because she was enraged with herself for not disliking him as much as she felt she should have disliked him in view of his sissified refusal to get her the ladder.

The silence in which they trudged along, he touching her elbow now and then with nervous fingers to prevent her from falling, became insufferable to the girl. She began to speak literally in ignorance of what she was going to say, knowing only that she desired to say nothing pleasant, realizing that she must say nothing unpleasant.

"It was fortunate for me that you fancy solitary strolls in the dark," she said.

"Oh, I don't know that I'm awfully fond of traipsing about alone in the dark," Guido replied, "but my friend is dancing in the pavilion and so I was thrown upon my own resources."

A few words spoken at random may have cataclysmic effects. Guido's innocent reply produced an extraordinary effect on Miss Geddes. Usually a very self-controlled girl, she had been considerably ruffled by Guido's behavior from the very start. She chose to justify her agitation, which it pleased her to regard as unpleasant, by assuring herself with a degree of violence foreign to her nature that her rescuer was everything that a rescuer should not be. His last remark she subjected to a cruel analysis. Guido, of course, had referred to Otto in speaking of his friend, unconsciously ignoring the fact that through usage a definite significance—not platonic—accrues to this word of all work, when preceded by the personal pronoun, first person, singular. Miss Geddes can scarcely be blamed for attaching this meaning to Guido's pronominal phrase.

"He needn't have dragged that in," she thought. "Even if he is the handsomest thing that ever happened, he needn't think that every girl he meets is going to fall in love with him right off. But then, how can he help being conceited, poor thing? No male creature has any business to be as good-looking as he is. It's not fair. He ought to be put in a cage and not allowed at large."

Thus communed Miss Geddes with herself. She was, it will be observed, a somewhat precocious young lady for her years, for she was just about the same age as Guido. Her fury might have seemed somewhat forced, somewhat assumed, to the trained psychologist. At any rate, as she half-walked, half-stumbled along over some gnarled roots and was saved from an imminent fall by the despised rescuer's timely aid, a different viewpoint presented itself for her inspection. Possibly her shaking-up had jounced it from out her finer perceptions; possibly, also, the touch of the boy's fingers against her arm, so delicate, so nervously proper, so swiftly, almost automatically self-releasing, called a halt to her unjust thoughts. It seemed to her now nobly magnanimous that he did not

object to his "friend's" dancing when—for some reason—he was not participating.

Miss Geddes had a fair share of the healthy curiosity which inheres in all daughters of Eve.

"It's rather nice of you not to object to your friend's having a good time without you," she said.

Guido thought the remark odd, but was untouched by the remotest of suspicions touching its cause.

"Why not?" he remarked. "He's awfully fond of it, and I—well, I don't dance, you see."

The anticlimax of that "he" almost caused the young lady to laugh aloud. The darkness hid the smile that broadened the high-bred, narrow face. Dejection had suddenly changed to hopefulness—hopefulness or what she did not inquire of herself—and she suspected the possibility of a still higher rise in the barometer of her moods if only his unwillingness to handle the ladder could be satisfactorily explained. With such rapid strides had her faith in him progressed, she took it for granted now that a satisfactory explanation was possible. The truth is this low-browed, madonna-visaged Diana was very eager to have no reason for entertaining disapproval of her Romeo—to like where she did not respect was such a novel sensation.

"I'm afraid it was thoughtless of me to ask you to bring that heavy ladder up onto the terrace," she said, with crafty intent.

"It wasn't so very heavy," Guido replied. "Any of my friends could easily have managed it. You see, I—well——" his voice blundered as well as his words, and she knew, although she could not see, that he was flushing. "You see, my back isn't very strong and that's why I couldn't lift the ladder and that's why I cannot dance. I'd rather have you know this about me than think me—well, I don't know what."

Miss Geddes was deeply moved. Hers was a generous nature and might be relied upon to do abundant penance.

"I'm glad you told me," she said. This she felt to be insufficient, and she added, after a moment: "I confess I was surprised at your inability to fetch the ladder."

"Then why," said downright Guido, "did you not ask

me right out? Why did you profess thoughtlessness in asking me to fetch it?"

Miss Geddes laughed. She laughed long and happily. It was a delicious, infectious, throaty sort of laugh. She could not imagine any other boy of her acquaintance tripping her up like that; they would have lacked the wit or the courage or both. Oh, he was deliciously straightforward and honest!

"I was coming to that," she said. "If you'd given me time. I suppose I'll just have to 'fess up now. I'd been unjust to you in thought, so I—you know what's called pumping—well, I just pumped you."

It was Guido's turn to laugh. He laughed not as she had done in a long, joyous, contented stretch, but intermittently, amusedly, almost spasmodically as various aspects of their brief acquaintanceship struck him. He had never met anyone who had so titillating an effect upon his mind, who so garnered in all his admiration. He was unaware that his heart as well as his mind was undergoing stimulation.

Miss Geddes, however, did not capitulate entirely. She reserved final abasement of spirit until the interview with her father should have taken place. For she insisted that her father must thank her rescuer. There was also the matter of the money which he had disbursed, and which troubled her because she hardly knew how to approach it.

They had some difficulty in making their way through the dancers and along the line of tables arranged along the edge of the hall.

"There," she said, suddenly, "there's my dad. All alone. If that isn't just like him! But having a glorious time."

Guido followed the direction of the girl's eyes. It seemed hardly possible that the gentleman whom she thus indicated should be her father, he was so very young, so very, very boyish-looking. He was tall and slender, with the figure of a man of thirty. His brown hair was remarkably heavy, a perennial smile hovered in the corners of his mouth, and his eyes were hazel.

"Daddy," the girl flew to him like a child, "Daddy, I was locked up."

"Locked up!" exclaimed Professor Geddes. "Good

heavens, a daughter of mine! Locked up. You surprise me, my dear. And what had you done?"

For a moment Guido was considerably taken aback by this swift exchange of words. Then, as father and daughter burst out laughing simultaneously, he comprehended. They were first-rate friends, these two. They were such good pals and felt such a wealth of affection and trust for each other that they teased each other outrageously when occasion offered, hiding the gentler emotions under a whimsical mask which, to the casual onlooker, at first might prove a little disconcerting.

"Of my offense later. Meanwhile, Daddy, seriously, quite, quite seriously, I don't know what I would have done if Mr.—Mr.—oh, would you mind awf'ly telling me your name?"

Guido gave his name.

"That," thought the girl as she heard the German name, "explains the 'my friend' and the slurring of some syllables and the over-pronunciation of others." She said, forgetting that she had said "quite, quite seriously" only a moment before, "Mr. Hauser bailed me out, Daddy. So please thank him properly."

"I'm sure I'm infinitely obliged to you, Mr. Hauser," said Professor Geddes, "although, to be perfectly candid, I haven't the least notion what I am thanking you for."

"For nothing," said Guido, audaciously falling in with their spirit, "for less than nothing, sir, and yet for more."

"'Lysander riddles very prettily,'" Professor Geddes remarked, eyes twinkling.

"Then must Lysander unriddle," said Guido, laughing. "You are thanking me for less than nothing because what I accomplished required neither wit, brawn nor courage. You are thanking me for more than nothing, because the little which it was my privilege to do gave me great pleasure."

"Bravo," cried Professor Geddes. "If you don't mind my saying so, I predict that you will be either a writer of stories or a seller of gold-bricks. And now, will you not tell me from what dreadful fate you preserved my daughter?"

Guido related what had occurred as briefly as possible, omitting his abortive attempt to procure the ladder. Pro-

fessor Geddes listened attentively and with growing gravity.

"That was an awkward situation for Janet to find herself in," he said. "It might have been very awkward, indeed, if you hadn't turned up. She left the building with me. I should never have thought of looking for her there."

"I went back, Daddy, but you didn't notice," said Janet, quite meekly.

"If I hadn't turned up, some one else would have," said Guido, airily.

Was there ever a sweeter, cleaner, saner name than Janet? To the lad's intoxicated vision it seemed like the murmur of a brook, with all a brook's suggested wholesomeness and purity.

"And why, pray, did you return to the Castle?" the Professor asked.

"To the Library," Janet corrected him gently. "I was fascinated."

"Fascinated?" Humorously lifting his eyebrows, Professor Geddes pronounced the word with a whimsical slowness that dragged it out to thrice its length.

"What fascinated you?" Guido asked.

"I cannot tell."

"But you promised to, you know."

"Did I? So I did. Well then, I shall have to tell."

Guido perceived that she was not merely making a great mystery over nothing, after the tantalizing fashion of girls, but that she had a reason, real enough to herself, for not wishing to divulge the nature of the magnet that had drawn her back to the beautiful old room. She was hesitating over her reply. Too honest to lie, she was nerving herself to redeem her promise.

"You needn't tell if you don't like," said Guido, quickly, wishing to be chivalrous. But the girl flung back, a challenge in her voice:

"Of course I am going to tell. I went back because there was a beautiful old volume of Shakespeare which I wanted to look at carefully. And I began to read, foolishly. And became engrossed, more foolishly still. And the play I read was King John."

What a coincidence! So that was why she had been

so reluctant to speak of her reading. It really was disconcerting. It made one feel afraid. Panic came to his eyes, and a deep, scorching, burning red mounted slowly, heavily to his cheeks. Simultaneously the girl's face turned scarlet. Confusion worse confounded Professor Geddes had never seen. The excellent man was both amused and dismayed. What scrupulous parent would not be dismayed to see his daughter, carefully reared and guarded, hoist the crimson badge of shame to her cheek, thereby convicting herself of being the fellow galley-slave of a strange young man concerning whom he had no knowledge save that he was comely of person, very evidently well-to-do, quick at repartee and obliging to beauty in distress—all traits which the notorious Lotharios of history and fiction have possessed in a preeminent degree?

Convention, meanwhile, required that the two galley-slaves be rescued from their embarrassment, which seemed to be eating into their very marrow.

"'All's well that ends well,'" said Professor Geddes. "How fond we all are of plagiarizing from the Great Bard. That is so, no doubt, because Shakesperian scholars find that every contingency of life, of thought, of feeling can be better described by quoting from the Folio pages than by original comments. Mr. Hauser, you'll join us in a salad and ice-cream, won't you?"

Guido glanced guiltily at Janet. The crimson tide was slowly receding from her cheek. Perceiving that his glance was one of interrogation, Miss Geddes said:

"Do."

As the monosyllable expressed no very acute desire for his society, he felt constrained to say, dubiously:

"I should like to awf'lly."

"Good," said Professor Geddes, heartily, "that's settled. Take a chair, won't you?"

Guido took a chair, and immediately regretted the act, for a subtle but distinct change immediately came over Miss Geddes. It was not that she was chilly, or distant, or inattentive to the conversation, in which she bore quite an animated part at times, but she appeared to be full of unrest, nervous, ill at ease, even, as if something unpleasant was troubling her.

And so there was. For she had suddenly remembered

the money which Guido had tipped the night watchman. She had no idea whether the bill had been a one or a five-dollar bill or a bill of intermediate denomination. Also she did not wish to offend this handsome boy by asking her father to refund what he had disbursed; on the other hand, since the expense had been incurred in her behalf, common honesty required that he should be reimbursed.

She was well-bred and tactful, but she was young and her resources were sorely taxed to think of some avenue of approaching the sordid subject.

Her father, meanwhile, was telling Guido that he was the new Professor of History at the Anasquoit College. Janet heard the conversation as in a dream. She was still busy with her little problem. When Guido finally rose to go, she plucked up courage, and said:

"Daddy!"

"Well, daughter?"

"Daddy, Mr. Hauser *bailed* me out."

"Bailed? I do not——"

"Oh yes, you do. He had to fetch a man, you know, and get him to let down the drawbridge across the moat."

To Janet's infinite relief, the Professor understood at last.

"Mr. Hauser, that part of our debt at least I can cancel."

"Oh, sir, I beg of you!" cried Guido, crimson again.

"You must tell me how much I owe you," said the Professor, quietly.

"Oh, sir, really, really! If you insist, sir, I shall feel that you regret not being able to cancel the balance of your debt—if debt it be—as well."

This was more than mere repartee, more than surface manners, more than angling for a lady's favor. Professor Geddes gravely slipped the purse back into his pocket. All three of the actors in this little comedy were glad to be rid of its sight. It had looked very big and very ostentatious and disgustingly vulgar to all of them.

"I would not cancel the balance of our debt if I could, Mr. Hauser," said Professor Geddes, with a sweetness which seemed strange in a man. "There are debts which enrich both the debtor and the creditor. I hope you will come and see us. My wife will be happy to meet you."

Guido left the pavilion treading on air. He ran blindly

into Otto, who had waited for his friend for a full half-hour. He, too, was full of his own affairs, that is, of Elschen. Was there another girl so sweet, so innocent, so amiable as Elschen Marlow? Guido thought there was, but wisely did not say so. Otto was enjoying his hyperboles so thoroughly that Guido had not the heart to intrude upon them with his own thoughts.

All the way home Otto indulged in his monologue. Guido did not really mind. He was thinking a monologue of his own.

Professor Geddes and Janet started for home soon after Guido left them. The moon had risen, the June night was balmy and sweet with the scent of a thousand and one herbs, grasses, weeds, flowers and trees—sweet also with the voice of oven-bird and Baltimore oriole, of cat-bird and Bob White, all busy with their evening songs.

Father and daughter were woodland devotees. The crowded trolley, swirling through dusty and unbeautiful thoroughfares, did not attract them. Janet suggested that they walk home—skirting along the brow of the Palisades and descending to sea-level by a flight of stairs which abutted upon a forsaken corner of Anasquoit. From whence they could easily jitney home. Professor Geddes agreed.

Janet slipped her arm through her father's, an action which he knew to be a prelude to confidences.

"Daddy!"

"Daughter."

"Daddy, do you like him?"

"Him? Who's 'him?'"

"Daddy, now don't be silly. You do like him, don't you?"

"You do, evidently."

"I want to know if you do. I want your opinion, your definite opinion. In words. Oh, my serene and whimsical father, I knew by your manner right along that you do not disapprove."

"Are you sure?"

"Daddy, you violently admired."

"Go to, go to," cried Professor Geddes, playfully. "Forsooth, fond girl, what was there to admire about the stripling, to violently admire?"

"Daddy, you are so foolish. You liked the way he

stood up to you. Daddy, you're my dearest chum and pal, and I'll tell you this in confidence. Though you are not even as old as myself and the twinkle in your eye makes you seem only half that age, I should hate to encounter your gaze if my conscience were not clear. You liked the way that boy stood up to you, you moral Samson."

Professor Geddes laughed.

"The blush remains to be explained, my lady," he said.

"Why, Daddy, how very tactless to mention *that*. Daddy, I almost perished. There I'd been reading the very lines he threw at me the first thing he saw me:

"Ah me! My uncle's spirit is in these stones,
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones."

What do you make of that, Daddy? Don't be silly and tell me it was a coincidence. You know it wasn't. It was a telepathic occurrence, or something of the sort. You know it was."

"I'm beginning to think the little blind boy has thrust an arrow into my girl's heart."

"How pedantic you are, Daddykins. I'm plumb crazy about him of course."

"Haven't I heard that before? How often?"

"Never. I never said 'plumb' before, Daddy."

"H'm."

"If I did, I didn't mean it."

"If you meant it now, child, would you say it?"

"Why not, to you? To no one else, Daddy. Would you have me make confidants of girls I've met twice or thrice instead of you, you dear old Daddy?"

Professor Geddes patted Janet's hand affectionately.

"Daddy, say you like him—if you do."

"My girl, I ought to know boys; I've taught them all my life. This one has the making of a fine man in him. But——"

"No 'buts,' Daddy, surely."

"But—he is congenitally and acquiredly——"

"Not weak, Daddy, oh, surely not weak."

"Sensitive, daughter. And the unthinking call sensitive-ness weakness because they judge of causes by the effects

and the effects of these two widely differing qualities are only too often identical."

"Sensitive to what, Daddy?"

"To everything. Beauty."

"*Father!* In women?"

"Child! In everything—everywhere—sensitiveness to goodness, sensitiveness to evil, they lie in the same chalice."

"To evil? Now, I wonder, just what that can mean?"

"To be sensitive to something does not presuppose a liking for that something. It may mean abhorrence."

"Ah! Go on."

"That boy is sensitive to every current of life, thought, action. He may at times—will—find himself in troubled waters."

"But unmuddied, Daddy."

"I hope so. I think so."

"Daddy, you like him heaps."

"Heaps, child? I like him mountains."

"Daddykins, you are the only and original dear. You have no idea how fine he was coming home through the woods. I didn't want to like him at first—I think I felt I was going to like him so very much—so I invented reasons for disliking him. But he was so fine—never once pressed my hand or squeezed my elbow."

"I hope my daughter never allows young men to press her hand or squeeze her elbow?"

The Professor's enunciation of the word "squeeze" was a homily in sex morality.

Janet laughed.

"Daddy," she protested, "I've heard it said, though, that the habit is not out of the fashion. And he was so solemn. So serious, all the way back. I thought he had no fun in him. Now I know better. The atmosphere he wove about me was due to courtierliness—is that a really and truly dictionary word, Daddy? And I think him quite perfect."

"Not perfect, Janet. No one is perfect. Perfection is an attribute of divinity, not of humanity."

"Humanly perfect."

"You are qualifying a superlative with an adverb postulating limitations."

"Daddy, don't be didactic. See the moonlight! Who

wants to talk adverbs and limitations with that light shining down—on you, on me, on *him*. HE wouldn't."

"He'd be guilty of the same barbarism as yourself, probably. He'd talk feminine perfection."

"Daddy, are you laughing at me?"

"Child, you are so young—a mere baby."

"I'm sixteen. You were only twelve when you saw my mother the first time, and you know you boast of it that you never even thought of any girl after that."

"Ah!" exclaimed Professor Geddes. "How unwise of a parent to confide his own past folly to his offspring! I shall have to write an essay warning other fathers and mothers."

Janet laughed.

"And I don't want you to say a word to mother. Promise."

"Promise nothing of the sort. Why?"

"Because I overheard mother say one day that no mother thought any man good enough for her girl to love. And I don't want mother to hate him."

"Well," said her father, "we'll see." To any definite promise he would not commit himself. He was the most loyal of men, loyal to wife, daughter, relatives, pupils and friends, and Janet was not unacquainted with this trait of her father's. She thought that he would have to settle to his own satisfaction whether loyalty to his wife forbade silence as to the condition of his daughter's heart, or whether loyalty to his daughter would prohibit him from communicating the intelligence to his wife. Janet had no idea that the question involved presented itself in a somewhat different form to her father. Was Janet's heart seriously involved—or would he needlessly alarm his wife by taking her into his confidence?

While he was still turning this over in his mind, Janet said, abruptly:

"You know, Daddy, it's not as if you'd found all this out by yourself—then it would be your property to discuss. But a priest never betrays the confessional."

"You little vixen," said the Professor, laughing heartily, "I believe that's why you told me it all."

"Shame on you," said Janet, pouting.

"But you've got me," her father continued. "I cannot

tell your mother, I perceive, without offending against the unwritten code. However, if I deem wise, there is nothing to prevent me from contriving to let her find out for *herself*."

"She'll probably do so after a while without your contrivance," said Janet, coolly.

"Then, what do you gain?"

"Time. Mother's bound to like him after a while. But you know, she's less impulsive than you and I—we're a couple of willful children compared to her—we judge with our hearts, she judges with her head."

"Your confidence in this young man is very great," said her father, reflectively.

Janet became very serious. The lovely face wore a look of dignified composure, as she replied:

"It is as great as my confidence in you, Daddy. That comparison must not hurt you. You have a faculty for making the real character of those who come in contact with you stand out sharply. Mother once called you a catalytic agent where moral qualities are concerned. You act peculiarly on people, they show themselves as they really are. And for all your lovely simplicity of manner, Daddy, there are folks I know who are simply never at ease with you—because, well never mind why. I dare say they know. Now, I've never seen any of my friends so perfectly at ease with you as *he* was. And so, with apologies to Kipling:

"And my dear young Papa and Mister Hausah,
They are brothers under the skin."

Professor Geddes' mouth relaxed with a smile.

"You little witch," he said, but his eyes were grave.

CHAPTER III

FOLLOWING the general custom of the Anasquoit shops, the Leviathan did not close its doors on Saturday night until eleven o'clock, and the owner of the monster store was the last to leave at night as he was the first to come in the morning. He allowed himself as much time as he granted his employees, no more. Frau Ursula wondered often and often—so often that the reflection became a sort of reflex action which occurred at every meal—whether, if things had fallen out differently between them, he would not have shown greater leniency to himself, whether he would not have lingered after his meals to press her hand or to kiss her lips.

For the pendulum of her mind had swung back to the early days of her marriage. She maintained—or tried to maintain a fiction that Hauser had never loved her and that she never loved him. Otherwise, would he not have made some attempt at a reconciliation? She had given him openings enough. But year after year went by, bringing no change in their status. He was always reasonable now, always kind, always generous, always thoughtful. Since the opening of the Leviathan and their removal to the new home which he had built expressly for her, he had insisted on defraying all household expenses. She had opposed this at first, but had yielded finally because she hoped that in paying him the compliment of thus obligating her, he would realize that she was willing to yield him infinitely more than the moiety for which he asked if only he would ask of her this greater yielding. For the longest time she indulged in the most pathetic hopes. She would stand at the parlor window of her large, beautiful home, watching its master run alertly down the stoop and hoping that he might turn back and observe her watching his departure. But he never turned. And she finally ceased to stand at the window. And the years

went by, arid, wasted years which as she felt might have been filled with throbbing happiness for them both.

Not that she was unhappy. Guido was in perfect health, and that was happiness in itself. And she loved her home. It was, as Hauser had wished it to be, by far the most palatial residence of which the town boasted. The garden surrounding it would have been large for the suburbs. Within city limits it constituted almost a park. What with her independent means and the allowance her husband made her, she had more money at her disposal than she knew how to spend, so that the greater part of her income flowed into the coffers of the hospitals and public institutions of the county.

Vasalov had returned to Russia. She rarely thought about him or Varvara Alexandrovna. The Synthetic Experiment seemed almost a dead letter. Dr. Koenig, it is true, helped to keep the remembrance of it alive. But it seemed fantastic, chimerical and unreal. She had come to think of it as something with no real significance.

Dobronov was a frequent visitor at their home, and week-ended with them at least once a month. Longer than two days he would not stay, however. The flesh-pots of Egypt were delightful, he said, but enervating. To keep his morality in tip-top order up he must dwell in poverty. He cited St. Francis of Assisi, who refused to accept as an outright gift the tiny hospice in which himself and his followers found shelter, fearing that so valuable a possession would work corruption of some sort in their midst. It was the example of that saintly man, Dobronov appended, that had weaned him from the Bieguny doctrine that the nomadic life is the only one possible to virtue and poverty. For Dobronov had fallen prey to the charms of New York. He loved the vast city and was happier in his poor room in the tenement, where he chose to live, than he had been as the curled darling of St. Petersburg Society.

Guido, on returning home from the picnic on that particular Saturday night, came blithely into the dining-room. Hauser was just rising from table. He showed the wear and tear of life. His hair was now iron-gray and his features had undergone the singular chastening process of which the secret is known to time alone. He had never

been a handsome man and he was not a handsome man now. But he was that which is prized infinitely more by women, he was distinguished looking, and he wielded an air of silent authority and masterfulness habitual to the successful man of affairs. The eyes of other women apprised Frau Ursula of the value of her nominal possession.

Hauser nodded to Guido, and said:

"Had a good time?"

"Glorious, Father. Thank you."

Long discipline had made these two decently civil to each other, but the woman divined that the old antagonism merely slumbered and was not slain.

"Good-night, Ursula."

"Good-night, Erich."

He paused a moment on the threshold to light a cigar. Then his firm, elastic step was heard rapidly traversing the hall. The front door opened and closed silently behind him.

Guido came around to his mother's side of the table and kissed her.

"Well," he said, "I bet you're glad this day is over."

"I am," she said, soberly.

Frau Ursula had entertained that afternoon. She had given a "coffee," a form of relaxation very dear to the feminine Teutonic heart. To accommodate all her guests, the dining-room table had been extended to an abnormal, unshapely length. Enough time had not intervened between the departure of the last guest and the arrival of the master of the house to perform amputation upon the unnatural length of the monstrosity.

Hauser and his wife had supped at one end of the table, but the other end was by no means unfurnished. It was adorned with the remainder of the afternoon's repast, cakes of every description, cakes large and cakes small, layer-cakes and cakes with cream-filling and cakes that were stuck together with jelly, cakes frosted with pink, and cakes frosted with brown and cakes frosted with white; cakes plain at the top and cakes strewn with chopped nuts and raisins; high-domed cakes from whose lacerated sides bits of citron protruded; high-domed cakes whose interiors were graced with apples and marmalades and which smelled suggestively of something stronger than fruit or cider; flat

wholesome-looking cakes, surmounted with peaches or cherries or apples or *Streussel* beautifully crisped and brown.

Toward this latter cake, the plainest of all that splendid variety, Guido directed his attention.

"I'm awfully glad you saved me some of that, *Mutterchen*," he said.

"Yes, of course, but you must eat something warm first."

"I couldn't. I've had supper."

"With whom?"

"Oh, at the grounds," he answered evasively, wondering why he evaded. Frankness was a habit between himself and his mother. But the mere thought of speaking of Janet made his heart beat so furiously that he was quite incapable of attempting to discuss or describe or praise her.

"Was it as bad as usual?" he inquired, indicating the long table. He knew that his mother hated these coffees. She gave them only to please her husband. He believed that it helped his business.

"Hateful." She paused a moment and then went on.

"It's detestable to discuss one's guests and it's unkind to say unpleasant things about my own race and my own sex, but really, Guido, really——"

"Well, Mother, tell me all about and get it out of your system. Shoot."

He had answered her in English as he sometimes did to display his slang. In her disgust with the afternoon, she allowed his slang to pass unreprimanded.

"*Nun*——" he said, in German.

"Oh, the usual thing. Everything German is fine and good, and all other races are undesirable and inefficient."

Guido laughed.

"I heard 'em once," he said.

"How can you laugh, Guido?" She was quite indignant. "Revolting, I call it. Every one of our guests, it seems, had a pet antipathy for some race. Don't laugh, Guido, it's really—it's wicked."

"I wonder, Mother, if other races feel the same way about the Germans."

"I don't know. I don't think so. Perhaps they do."

"Americans?"

"I know so few. But I think not. Race prejudice is so stupid, so narrow."

"Especially stupid and narrow in this country," said Guido. He was now quite serious. "If men are equal, then races are equal, assuredly. Never mind those silly old women, Mother. There's a moon. You need air. Let's go for a walk."

"It's so late," she objected. "Your father never came home until nine o'clock."

"He's foolish to work so hard," said Guido. "Never mind if it is late, Mother. Let's go sit in the park."

"I'm too tired to walk. We'll sit on the porch."

"No, the porch won't do. You need the air of the river. I'll 'phone for the car. We can drive down to the river and you won't have to walk a step."

"Guido, you know your father likes the chauffeur to have the use of the car for his family on Saturday night. He's probably out in it now."

"Right-O, *Mutterchen*."

Nevertheless, he ran into the hall to the telephone.

"Your father will be SO displeased," she said once more, feebly.

The obstinacy which seized him periodically every four or five months was upon him. Thus, she reflected, did he vindicate his sex. Incomprehensible creatures—men. She resigned herself to going with him for the drive. She would not disappoint him, of course. But she would scold him a little, just to let him know that his graduation had not unfettered him entirely from her authority.

"*Mutterchen!*" Having finished his telephoning, he came upon her radiant, breathless, flushed. "I've ordered a taxi." Here he paused and kissed her. "How he cajoles me," she thought and wondered how her show of authority over him would fall out. He laid another soft kiss on his mother's cheek. "It's my treat," he said. The third kiss fell athwart her face—somewheres between eyes and mouth. "It's fine and dandy to have such a princely allowance as you let me have, Mother." Kiss Number Four alighted on her hair. "Fifty dollars a month—if Otto would only let me hand it over to him for the next few years." Kiss Number Five, owing to a rapid movement on Frau Ursula's part, landed on her nose, a cir-

cumstance which set young Mr. Hauser to laughing uproariously and unrestrainedly, as if he had been a child instead of a young man. Frau Ursula loved to hear him laugh like that. The child that had been seemed to peer through the folds of the man that was in the making.

She tried to appear vexed with him for his extravagance in ordering the taxi. Secretly, she was enormously pleased. Few lads, she thought, would spend their money so lavishly upon their mothers. A pang went through her heart. Some day he would have to know. But this assurance had suffered such frequent iteration as to have lost its pristine horror. A question, comfortable and soothing, rebounded from it immediately. Why should he have to know? There was no one to tell him, excepting herself. Dr. Koenig and Dobronov were in the secret, but they would never divulge it. And she had made no definite promise to Varvara Alexandrovna, although, as she had faithfully carried out all the lunatic instructions of the "murderess" regarding Guido's education, the only logical conclusion would be to apprise him of his parentage and all it involved upon his coming of age.

But she shrank back from making this ultimate sacrifice. To stigmatize herself as an interloper and as an impostor, to brand her motherhood as spurious, was something which should not be required of her. She balked at mere thought of the thing. It was so preposterous.

Guido was kneeling at her side.

"*Mutterchen*, I love you so very much. There's not another *Mutterchen* like you in the whole world. My sweet and pretty little mother. My charming and lovely little mother. My good, kind, saintly mother."

He kissed her hands and her cheeks and her hair. She knew that something had occurred to make him happy. Always, when he was superlatively happy and contented, it was his habit to pour out these libations at her feet, to treat her with an added gentleness or tenderness, to allow the fires of his filial passion to burn more brightly. When he was unhappy he crept away by himself. He never troubled her to comfort him. Later, to-morrow or the day after, he would tell her what had stirred him so. But she knew him well enough not to expect a confidence to-night.

The moon was glorious indeed. A drive of five minutes brought them to the banks of the Hudson. They commanded an unimpeded view of the stately sky-line of the metropolis, scintillating goldenly with a phalanx of signs that made bright the darkest night. The majestic sight never failed to move these two. They sat hand in hand, in silence watching the marvelous spectacle with its suggestion of illimitable grandeur, wealth and energy palpitating behind and away from the visible line of river-front buildings. Above all shone the moon, splendid in its high isolation, mysterious, eternal, young and yet old. Now and then a ferry-boat, bright like a monster firefly, swam into the pathway shed by the moon, swam through it and away, splashing through the fairy ribbon, dappling itself with gold, yet leaving that golden sheen unbroken and intact as before. Now and then the uncouth bulk of a hoisting float or pile-driving engine drove roughshod over that strip of gold, leaving no smudge nor speck upon its glistening surface.

"Beautiful, oh, beautiful," Guido breathed in his mother's ear.

"Yes, but, alas! Since the *Titanic* went down I cannot look upon the water without thinking of the hideous tragedy of all those lives——" her voice trailed off. She was overcome by the pathos of the recollection.

"Yes, Mother, dreadful, dreadful."

For a fleeting moment Guido modulated his voice to the accents of compassion. But his former mood was strong upon him and he rebounded to it immediately. Never had Frau Ursula known his resilience to carry him away from a compassionate mood so quickly. Prescience warned her whence this resilience might draw its vigor. Her heart contracted. She chid the foolish organ. A girl? At his age? Preposterous. Yet such things had been. Well, better to lose him thus than to the Synthesis; for, in case of the re-emergence of Vasalov or the "murderess" what better antidote could she wish for to the baleful fascination which professional assassination might possibly exert upon Guido, than a sweetheart or a wife. Besides, it might be *Elschen*!

"Did you see *Elschen* to-day?" she asked abruptly.

"Yes, of course. Otto danced with her all afternoon."

"And you?"

"I—I read Macaulay, Mother."

She noted the slight huskiness in his voice and knew that he was struggling to tell her of whatever had befallen during the afternoon. He was always more impulsive in deed than in speech. His very impetuosity seemed at times to render him inarticulate, for it made it more difficult for him to choose his words and his phrases carefully, prudently, in order to convey his precise meaning. And always must he digest and turn over and examine from all sides any adventure that befell him before bringing the tale to her.

Therefore she was content to wait, knowing that his silence was due not to secretiveness or to secretiveness' uglier sister, deceit, but merely to his passion for an orderly, systematic presentation.

Days elapsed before he nerved himself to tell his mother about Janet. How could he find words to speak suitably of the starry, incomparable creature who was as far above all other girls of his acquaintance as the sky was above the earth? Janet's image never left him. He looked for her in every black-eyed girl whom he chanced across in the street, and then amused himself by noting the points of difference between these other dark-haired maidens and his nonpareil. He had, in a flash, found his taste in women. As he judged all other mothers by the standard of Frau Ursula, so, henceforth would he apply to all girls the criterion with which Janet had furnished him. Nor did he judge blindly. Undeniable as was Janet's beauty, her exquisite fineness was the paramount recollection that lingered in his memory.

Within a week he called. He dreaded intensely calling, and it is doubtful whether he would have been able to overcome the active fear of doing so, if the negative fear of encountering Professor Geddes in class with the burden of discourtesy weighing him down, had not been the stronger incentive.

His dread was both a general and a specific dread. The Geddeses were Americans—very, very different from the German-Americans of easy, off-hand manners, with whom he had been accustomed to associate all his life. His acquaintance with them was cursorily brief. He had no

idea of the size of the family. There might be a dozen girls. There was a Mrs. Geddes, so much he knew and his fancy painted in lively colors the picture of a gilt-edged, inaccessible lady who would frown upon him from toplofty heights and utterly crush him. He suffered from a relapse of the cowardice which had made him so miserable in his childhood during the days which preceded Mrs. Thornton's coming. He tried to buoy and brace himself by reminding himself of the happiness that friendship had brought him. But he hardly dared hope for so happy a repetition, and the residue of his reflections was a painful conception of Mrs. Geddes as a lady of superfine breeding and merciless superciliousness. He overlooked the circumstance that the two attributes are not compatible.

On his way to the Geddes home he encountered Otto, sunk in black gloom, and loping along with enormous strides of his long legs. Otto had left his position that day, his stenographic position at twenty-five per which, lasting through the summer, was to have supplied him with funds to defray his tuition and his books for the first year at college.

"Why, what happened?" Guido demanded, seriously concerned.

"The man I worked for dictated things I didn't like," Otto replied, sourly.

"*Things?*"

"Words. Words a gentleman wouldn't use."

"What do you mean, Otto?"

"Curse words. Downright bad words. I refused to type words of such description."

"Words merely profane, or foul words?"

"*Merely* profane! Well, yes, they were not foul, I suppose."

"Couldn't you have stuck it?"

Otto regarded Guido with horror in his eyes.

"You don't seriously mean that, do you?" he demanded.

"Well, I don't know," said Guido. "I've always understood that a stenographer was just a sort of animated pen. I don't know that I could look upon myself in just that light, either, so I mustn't blame you."

"Of course you couldn't," said Otto. He seemed to breathe more freely. "I'm going to work in the machine

shop to-morrow," he said. "But, of course, I can't earn enough there in summer to tide me over the entire winter."

"I say, Otto, why don't you let mother or me loan you the money? It's all poppy-cock, this going to work for a year in order to study a year. Why, if you go to college, you can in your first year after you're through repay almost half of your debt—if you really insist on making it a loan instead of a well—a little gift."

"It's awfully decent of you to offer it again," said Otto. "I think, perhaps, a loan——"

"Why not a gift, Otto? If you were rich and I not well-to-do, do you think I'd hesitate to let you finance me?"

"Like fun you would," said Otto. "You've been rich all your life, Guido. You don't know what it feels like to be the other thing."

"Well, at any rate, you'll let us finance you?"

"I suppose so," said Otto, reluctantly. "If you'll take my note."

They shook hands on it and then Guido turned down Chestnut Street to proceed to the Geddes home.

The house which Professor Geddes and his wife had rented was situated only a few doors from Bismarck Street—but it was not on Bismarck Street, a fact upon which Anasquoit might be trusted to remark. It was a house which stood far back from the street in a garden, and it had always seemed a shabby, slouchy sort of a place to Guido. He was surprised to see the improvement in its appearance. It had suddenly assumed dignity, and character, and self-respect.

The garden had been weeded, and cleaned of the accumulation of old leaves and papers which had habitually littered it. The house had formerly been painted a dingy brown. Now it lay glimmeringly white in its patch of garden. Upon the front door shone a brightly polished brass stag-head-and-ring knocker, the diamond pane windows were neatly curtained and green window boxes, filled with pink geraniums in full bloom, graced the window-sills.

Guido lingered a moment at the gate. The old place, thus metamorphosed, had not merely character, it had atmosphere. It seemed to him a fitting abode for Janet.

The door was opened by a colored maid in white cap and apron and a black close-fitting dress. Servants in

uniform were also an innovation for Anasquoit, and Guido's fear of Mrs. Geddes and sense of oppression returned.

Guido asked to see Miss Geddes, and had a silver salver thrust under his nose.

"I have no card with me," he stammered, furious with himself for being thus derelict.

The girl smiled good-naturedly.

"Whaht's the name?" she asked.

"Mr. Hauser."

"Whaht?"

"Hauser," said Guido, more loudly.

"Wha-a-a-a-aht?" demanded the girl again.

Guido repeated his name once more. Suddenly a great light seemed to dawn upon the girl. The light of comprehension which dawned in her eyes carried with it the flattering sense that the name was not new to her, was, perhaps, a name traditional in the household.

His pleasurable excitement, consequently, was very great as he waited in the drawing-room which was a real drawing-room and not a parlor. The furniture—he had known that that would be so, of course—was Colonial mahogany, and wonderful faded-looking velvets and hangings and cushions in blues and wine-color and greens gave a soft, rich, lived-in appearance to the room. Guido had the wit to guess that the hangings and cushion tops were not really faded but that their subdued effect was an intentional subtlety accruing to the new pastel shades of which he had heard so much.

His pleasurable excitement abated. The colored maid would have heard his name while Janet or her father told Mrs. Geddes of the adventure of her rescue from which he, Guido, could not very well be expunged. The balloon in which his vanity had been soaring sky-high, thus pricked, collapsed and left him stranded in deepest gloom.

He loved the room, but its perfection frightened him and he was feeling very small and ill at ease when the door finally opened and he became aware that someone had entered. He started to his feet and saw not Janet but a lady whom by the strong resemblance to Janet—the narrow, high-bred, handsome face—he would have known as Janet's mother anywhere.

For a moment they gazed at each other in mutual aston-

ishment, then the lady said, speaking in a high-pitched, pleasant voice:

"Did you wish to see me?"

Reflect upon the lad's dilemma. The question was awkwardly phrased, very awkwardly for so fine a lady. Could he say "no"? To do so might be to affront her mortally. "Yes" would be a palpable falsehood, for he had not asked for her, had not been introduced to her and had no official knowledge of her identity.

He said, looking very confused and distressingly red:

"I—that is—I asked for Miss Geddes."

"Miss Geddes! I see." The lady smiled discreetly. Her smile was delicious, a sort of porcelain smile, very refined, very gentle, very reticent. Never, never would it broaden into anything so vulgar as a grin, so bold as a laugh.

"Our maid blundered. She is almost deaf and names bother her horribly. I was expecting a Mr. Towzer. Towzer and Hauser—that IS your name, isn't it?—are somewhat alike in sound. Conceivably they might be mistaken—but Mr. Towzer is a paper-hanger whom I was expecting—and, of course, the moment I saw you I knew there was a mistake——"

Mrs. Geddes spoke in a swift, cool, breathless sort of a way, as if she were eager to get through with what she had to say and be done with it. She never lowered her voice to put a period to her words, but strung them along like festoons or an endless chain. She wolfed the spoken word as some good people wolf their food, which latter, as Guido was to learn, she disposed of most daintily. But she bolted her words, as if recognizing their utility while refusing them recognition as things of beauty.

"I am so sorry to have disturbed you," said Guido.

Mrs. Geddes gave the boy a swift, sharp look. Her manner changed imperceptibly from perfunctory civility to a courtesy in which a sort of self-contained, deliberate warmth was delicately observable.

"You did not disturb me," she said, in her quick, rattling way. "I should have wished at any rate to thank the young man who helped Janet the other evening—you must wait for Janet—she'll be in presently."

"She's here now," Janet's clear young voice cried from the

hall. A moment later the girl came walking quickly into the room. She shook hands warmly with Guido.

"I see you've made friends with Mother," she said, a mischievous glint in her black eyes.

"No," said Mrs. Geddes, in her rapid, breathless way, "Mother has made friends with him." She turned to Guido. "You'll excuse me now—won't you? I hope to see you here often. Janet frequently has her young friends in informally—we're barely settled yet—the rooms are still topsy-turvy."

Her glance strayed about the room, from spotlessly oiled floors to spotlessly swept rugs, from immaculate ceiling to polished furniture, from well-hung portieres to well-arranged curtains. Unconsciously Guido followed the path of her eyes.

"Terribly topsy-turvy, this room, isn't it, Mr. Hauser?" naughty Janet demanded.

"I thought it perfect," the boy said, simply. "I think it the prettiest room I have ever seen."

"Rude boy," exclaimed Janet, mischievously. "Do you not know it is the height of discourtesy to praise other people's possessions? For in doing so, you admit the possibility of lapses in their taste. And that to my mother!"

The facile color came to Guido's cheek, but his voice was steady, his speech fluent, as he replied:

"The taste that is responsible for this room is quite incapable of any lapses, I should say. I hope, Mrs. Geddes, you will overlook my fault in admiring it."

"This room is the pride of my heart and I love to have folks tell me they like it," Mrs. Geddes replied, adding: "Don't let Janet tease you. Tease back—it's the only way to hold your own with her. I've known her for seventeen years—and I'm not used to her yet."

Janet exclaimed: "Hear, oh, hear!"

Mrs. Geddes extended her hand.

"Good-bye, Mr. Towzer," she said.

"Hauser! Mother. Hauser!"

"Ah;" said Mrs. Geddes, in her usual hasty way which seemed to involve the mere commonplaces of existence and none of the humorously embroidered themes, "that is our joke, and if Mr. Hauser is wise, he will keep you

guessing a while as to its nature!" From which Guido gathered that Janet's sense of mischief was not inherited solely from her father.

Janet was in a merry mood. Guido thought she looked younger than on the day of the picnic—quite a child—and even more beautiful. He thought her to-day not only more beautiful than any creature he had ever seen but far lovelier than he had imagined flesh and blood might be. It seemed to him the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to him that he should be sitting alongside of so divine a creature, spending an hour all alone with her. That possibility also had exceeded the boldest flights of his imagination. Adolescence had him in its grip and painted a reality which in sooth was barely beautiful in hues which made it seem super-real and super-wonderful. He compared her again to the other girls of his acquaintance—a fruitful subject. Even Elschen paled into insignificance before the royal magnificence of this girl's beauty and wit.

He felt as if her mere presence shed a luster upon him. She stimulated his mind. In serious conversation, as with Dobronov, he had always been able to hold his own. Of small talk he had hitherto fought shy, pretending to despise its frivolity but secretly appalled by the demands it made upon one's alertness and sense of timeliness. Now small talk seemed the most natural thing in the world. More than that; Janet injected into it wit and shrewdness. Guido was unaware that he was contributing as his share of the conversation a fund of repartee and point which the girl had not been accustomed to from one of her own generation.

As he was leaving, Janet inquired, abruptly:

"Are you coming to see us at our country home in Sullivan County?"

"Of course, I'll come," said Guido, "if your mother will invite me."

"Oh, Mother'll invite you all right. You've made a hit with Mother, Mr. Towzer. You knew it, didn't you? Well, you will the first time you see her manner toward any friend of mine or father's she doesn't like. It makes a refrigerator look like a sizzling July day."

A few days later Frau Ursula threw open the spacious grounds of her handsome home for the annual fete of the

Woman's Suffrage Club. She had done so for years, partly out of deference for Hauser's wishes, who let no opportunity for the social advancement of the owner of the Leviathan escape unimproved, partly as a matter of friendship for Mrs. Erdman, whose incumbency of the chairmanship of the Club continued unopposed from year to year.

"If you continue like this, you will some day, like Cæsar, be accused of aspiring to the crown," Hauser had said to Mrs. Erdman at last year's fete, a speech which pleased his wife inordinately. She retained the European's taste for classical allusions.

To the garden fete this year came Mrs. Geddes and Janet, presenting cards which proclaimed them to be the guests of Mrs. Horatio Frazin, the wife of the President of the Faculty. Guido, chatting with Elschen, was leaning against one of the columns of the pergola, which at this season was latticed with a profusion of pink ramblers. He was transfixed with amazement upon seeing Mrs. Geddes and Janet enter the garden. Elschen was narrating at length some experience of her uneventful girlhood in her precise, unimaginative, correct way. Without giving offense he could not interrupt her to greet the stranger newcomers. Janet caught sight of him and gave him a brilliant smile. The girl's beauty and manner were such that a perceptible lull fell upon the company and everybody clandestinely studied the fair unknown. Elschen, subtly warned as girls will be on such occasions, stole a glance at Guido's face and stopped her narrative. Guido, though he had not been listening to her words, noticed that Elschen had stopped speaking and said:

"Why don't you go on with your story, Elschen?"

"Because I do not think that it interests either of us very much," Elschen replied. There was something under the surface innocence of this reply, a hidden barb, that amazed Guido intensely. He politely entreated her to resume her story, vowing that he at least, was interested in it. He gave some attention to it now. But Janet's presence had so sharpened his perceptions that his thoughts radiated in three or four directions at one and the same time, and while Elschen continued her painstaking account he reflected how horrified Otto would have been by the

polite fib which he had just foisted upon Elschen. But, what was worse, to tell a white lie or be a social boor? Apparently man cannot always control the channel of his thoughts and inclinations, and the choice between fibbing or being rude becomes inevitable at times. He must discuss this with Dobronov. But not to-day. Dobronov would be quite capable of perching himself upon a pillar of the pergola and preaching the gospel of unequivocal honesty in speech; and Otto would be quite capable of applauding him and inviting all secret liars to step forward and publicly repent of their sins—like poor old Dr. Johnson in the market-place, or the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale in "The Scarlet Letter."

Otto appeared at this moment, cast a blighting look of stormy disapproval upon Mrs. Geddes and Janet and strode forward toward Elschen with the air of a conqueror.

"Elschen," he said, "I want to tell you what Guido is doing for me. He is going to loan me——"

"Oh, please, Otto——" Guido implored his friend with a gesture to be silent.

"I want Elschen to know," said Otto doggedly. "I'm not ashamed to be under obligations to you, Guido. And I want Elschen——"

Guido saw his chance to escape.

"All right, old fellow, if you must tell you must," he said, "but excuse me, will you?"

And he rushed away before either Otto or Elschen could stop him.

The intensified powers of observation which Janet's presence had engendered in him had enabled Guido, while listening to Elschen and defending himself against Otto, to observe that his mother had gone forward to greet Mrs. Geddes and Janet. She had not yet met them, but Guido had by this time told her about Janet, and he was certain, from the smile that came to her eyes as well as to her lips, that she guessed who the strangers were.

Guido reveled in the greeting that took place between his mother and Janet's. Two women of the world, wisely worldly, but not worldly wise, were taking each other's measure and the measure was not found to be wanting. He broke easily into the charmed circle, and was rewarded

by a smile from Janet, sweet and shy this time, not brightly dazzling as before.

Professor Geddes arrived a few minutes later. Mrs. Geddes presented her husband and then asked Hauser to show her the honeysuckle at the south end of the pergola. She seemed to attach a high valuation to Hauser, a fact which Frau Ursula did not fail to note. It pleased her that Mrs. Geddes should like Hauser. And she thought it understandable that it should be so. Hauser, faultlessly clad in pearl-gray, with his iron-gray hair and his portliness and his grave air of personal importance looked more like a minister plenipotentiary than a man of commerce.

Frau Ursula and Professor Geddes were left alone. He said a few conventional words of appreciation of the service Guido had rendered Janet, and then added, with the soft peremptoriness of an instructor:

"Mrs. Hauser, I want very much to borrow your boy for the summer—as my secretary, I mean. The salary will not be large—" he glanced about the beautifully appointed grounds and the prententious gray stone house—"it is almost an impertinence, I fancy, to speak of a salary for your boy. The only actual advantage I can offer him is a congenial occupation. I am taking it for granted that you and your husband are of the same mind as myself, that a young man of your son's age is better employed than unemployed all summer. I have in my summer home a library, or rather a large assortment of books which will evolve into a library once my secretary and myself have catalogued it. I hope you will not frustrate my plans."

Frau Ursula was anything but obtuse. The Professor's manner was as transparent as daylight. Nevertheless, she could not but fail to perceive that he had left much unsaid. Delicacy forbade that he should dwell upon the most salient advantage which Frau Ursula had apprehended fully before he ceased speaking—the close companionship into which Guido would be thrown with himself.

"No plan for Guido's summer would please me better," she said.

"Then——"

Her eye traveled down the broad garden-path, stumbled over an obstacle and was arrested by it. The obstruction

consisted of Janet and Guido, who stood facing each other. The smile on her lips and on his was almost one smile, so strong a sense of unity did it convey. In their eyes was the innocent, untroubled comprehension of youth for youth.

Frau Ursula turned and faced the Professor. A look, almost as penetratingly comprehending as that which interlocked the eyes of Janet and Guido passed between Janet's father and Guido's mother. She was a little perplexed. But of one thing she was sure. Professor Geddes and his wife were the most desirable acquaintances she had made in years, placing upon the word "desirable" not the crushing load of shekels and position but the frailer yet more precious burden of spiritual profit and gain. She might safely trust Guido to them. And Janet? As compared with Elschen? Frau Ursula prided herself upon her Americanism with justice, but the sense of race is never entirely dormant in any human being, and Frau Ursula's showed itself in her allegiance to the Germanic type of beauty, of which Elschen was such a rarely exquisite exponent. Frau Ursula was, indeed, so greatly under Elschen's spell that she did not believe any black-haired, black-eyed girl might eclipse golden-haired, blue-eyed Elschen. Moreover, Frau Ursula carried her aristocracy into the emotional and philosophic spheres. She believed in freedom of choice and was prepared to bow to the inevitable. Had not Hauser's cyclonic wooing followed by his unaccountable indifference, real or assumed, broken her to a complete acceptance of the inevitable?

Guido, approached a little later by Professor Geddes in his mother's hearing, accepted the Professor's proposition with eager alacrity. Frau Ursula, seeing him thus willing, nay eager, to leave her, experienced a pang. And yet, why should she? She was quite as willing and eager to have him go as he was to go. In other years Guido and she had spent the summers together at some mountain or sea-shore resort. She hoped, she knew not what, from a summer alone with Hauser.

Otto, when apprised that evening of Guido's plan for the summer, said curtly:

"Of course. Americans. Naturally you'd fall for them."

"What do you mean?" Guido demanded, with mounting indignation.

"I don't like these Americans," said Otto, stolidly. His manner was vague. Whether he referred especially to the Geddes family or included all Americans in his remark, Guido could not tell. "They're too sweet. So much sweetness isn't natural. It can't be sincere."

"I don't know what you mean," said Guido, curtly. "The German manner, I think, is quite as 'sweet' as you term it."

"Well, anyhow," Otto continued, "you can't see, of course, what everybody else can see—the reason why you're being asked to accept such a snap of a job."

"Well, who is everybody else?" Guido asked. "You cannot have talked me over with anyone else, because I told you only just now."

"I meant myself," said Otto, surlily.

"Well, what's the reason?" Guido demanded.

"You're a rich young fellow. They have a marriageable daught——"

"You——" Guido cried, springing furiously from his chair. He stopped short. He had been about to class his bosom friend with the quadruped which, highly esteemed as food, is—with justice—utterly condemned for its dearth of cleanliness.

Guido recollected in time that he was both Otto's host and prospective benefactor. Later he selfishly congratulated himself that benevolence had made him forego the pleasure of bringing into concussion his fist and Otto's nose. He remembered the lesson of his childhood and knew only too well what would have happened. Otto, healthy young savage, strong and lithe of limb and clean-lived and fearless as those forebears who, followers of Arminius, gave battle to the Roman legions and vanquished them in defense of their hearths and homes—Otto would have caught his—Guido's—hands and held them in his iron grip as easily as if they had been a child's, and holding Guido's thus, would have read him a lecture on the abomination of foul language.

There was a person of considerable importance in this history who was as greatly puzzled touching the Professor's motives in offering Guido the secretaryship as Otto was cock-sure of them. This was Janet.

"Daddy, why did you ask Guido to be your secretary?"

"Why do you think?" the Professor parried, gazing at his daughter over his book, for this conversation took place after supper in the Professor's study.

"If I knew I wouldn't ask," Janet replied, pouting.

"Perhaps I don't know myself."

"Daddy, you don't expect your little daughter to believe that, do you?"

"Um."

"Daddy, you do know."

"Well, possibly I do."

"You're a terrible tease, Daddy."

"Tease? I? Why, daughter, I thought it was you who were teasing me."

The professor continued dallying with his book throughout this talk, thus giving a fine air of abstraction to his answers. Janet sat in silence for a minute, watching him pretend to read a line or two. Suddenly she cried:

"I have it."

"What have you?"

"The reason you've asked Guido Hauser to be your secretary. You think I am seriously in love, which I am not, and you want to test this young man—see how he stands scrutiny at close range."

"That," said the Professor, "is a plausible reason. At any rate you've given me an idea."

Janet again fell silent for a moment. Then, she cried:

"Daddy, perhaps you've asked Guido because you think my cousin Cecil, whom Mother has asked to spend his vacation with us, would be lonesome without another boy, seeing there are nothing but women on top of that blessed mountain."

"That," said the Professor, gravely, "is also an excellent reason."

Janet again taxed her powers of conjecture.

"Perhaps," she said, "you asked him because he's a book-worm like yourself. It's a case of like seeking like."

"Do you know," said the Professor, laying down his book, "I think I like that reason best of all."

"Daddy," said Janet, with the utmost gravity, "when you were engaged, did you tease my mother as you tease me, and if you did, how did she stand it?"

"Well, that's your mother's secret, not mine. I divulge only my own secrets."

"Oh, yes you do," Janet laughed. "Daddy, please, please tell me."

"It's not good for you to get everything you want."

"It's so little I want just now—just a little information."

"Sometimes a little information is the most precious thing in the world."

"Well, this little bit of information is not the most precious thing in the world as far as I am concerned."

"No?"

"No; you are, you dear, naughty old Daddykins."

"Ha," cried the Professor. "Flattery. Bribery of the worst sort. A kiss. I shall never tell you now—no, never."

"Daddy!"

"Well, it's really not worth making such a fuss over. I'll tell."

"Ah, Daddy!"

"I asked Guido Hauser to be my secretary because I want him to catalogue my books."

Without a word Janet rose and made for the door.

"You're incorrigible, Professor Geddes," she said. "I go to sympathize with my mother."

"Ned," said Mrs. Geddes that evening, "I wonder if it was wise of you to ask that German-American boy up to Three Corners for the summer." Mrs. Geddes' manner showed that she was slightly displeased, if so harsh a term may be applied to any criticism of the Professor in which the Professor's wife might choose to indulge. Her displeasure, if displeasure it was, arose from the fact that her nephew, an English boy, was in the habit of spending his summers with them. Mrs. Geddes shared certain propensities of her sex, and she had a project in mind involving Janet and Cecil the nature of which will be clear without further specification.

"I believe," she continued, "that Janet is in love with him. And she's met him just twice. Do such things happen?"

"They do," said the Professor, adding contritely:

"I am afraid you are right, Jane. I didn't think she

was seriously in love with the lad when I made him the offer—she was so frank in admitting her infatuation. To-day she denied it.”

“That’s bad.”

“Very,” the Professor assented, still more humbly. “She is entirely too young to even think of a serious love affair.”

“I would rather have her involved in a serious love affair than in a frivolous one,” said Mrs. Geddes. “She’s not so young, either. She’s sixteen. I was eighteen when I married you. At nineteen I was a mother.”

“Girls keep young so much longer now-a-days,” said the Professor. His words might have been construed as unflattering, but although Mrs. Geddes perceived this possibility, the words did not sting her—not in the least.

She bit her inner lip to check the smile that would rise. Drooped eyelids hid the twinkle in her eyes, as she asked:

“Ned, if that sentence had been addressed to a woman not your wife, would it have been a compliment?”

“That I cannot say,” the Professor rejoined with some heat, “because I would not have addressed that sentence to any woman not my wife. Addressed to my wife it was a compliment. Ah, Jane,” the Professor cried, with sudden tenderness, “there never was and never will be a girl quite as beautiful as you were at seventeen.”

“Janet is far more beautiful than I was,” said Janet’s mother.

“Is she, really? Well, perhaps she is. But she hasn’t the dignity you had. That is what I meant by saying girls keep younger now-a-days.”

“She will be developing all the dignity she needs overnight,” said Mrs. Geddes, “and then you will go about lamenting that your *little* girl has vanished.”

“I would not have you think I found fault with our daughter,” said the Professor, quite seriously. “I think the child perfect as she is.”

Mrs. Geddes’ fluttering eyelids dropped again. Guido had guessed correctly as to the joint origin of Janet’s love of mischief.

“If Janet is perfect,” she said, “since perfection is an

extreme state, will you not have to revise your former asseveration—about myself?"

"Ah, my dear," expostulated the Professor, "the perfection of the Maréchal Niel rose does not in the least infringe upon the perfection of the American Beauty."

Mrs. Geddes rose and kissed her husband on the brow.

"It's wicked to tease you, Ned," she said, "you tease so easily."

"That may be so when you tease me, Jane," said the Professor. "Janet is not quite so successful."

"And now," said Mrs. Geddes, "'fess up. Why did you ask that German-American lad to be your secretary?"

"My dear—I asked your permission."

"My permission to engage a secretary, Professor? Pray, Ned, never say such things in the presence of others unless you wish to be thought a henpecked husband."

"Well, dear, I *consulted* you."

"Yes, you did. But I had the feeling, Ned, that you were not quite frank with me. Since seeing the lad—he is really an exceptionally charming boy—the impression is strengthened. So, come now, 'fess up."

"Well," said the Professor, uneasily, "I'll be entirely candid with you. I was afraid Janet might fall in love with Cecil."

"What's the objection to Cecil?"

"Nothing but that he's her cousin."

"Her first cousin once removed. The consanguinity is sufficiently remote, I should think, not to make a marriage undesirable."

"I do not agree with you, Jane," the Professor continued, warming to his subject. "In fact, I feel very strongly in the matter. I know the project is very dear to you——"

"It is. Cecil is—well, Cecil is Cecil."

"Yes. Quite as much so as Janet is Janet. Perfection each. What does Shakespeare say?"

"And she again wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be not that she is not he;
He is the half part of a blessed man,
Left to be finished by such as she;
And she a fair divided excellence."

"Professor," said Mrs. Geddes, "I always mistrust you when you quote Shakespeare. As you know. If you like Cecil so well——"

"I like him so well that I fear Janet may like him so well also."

"And you like Guido Hauser so well that you hope Janet may like him so well also."

"No, no," cried the Professor, "that is not so! Upon my word, that is not so. I would use Guido to neutralize Cecil, and Cecil to neutralize Guido."

"Are you quite—forgive me—truthful?"

"Cross my heart, honest Injun," said the Professor in such an injured little boy's tone that his wife laughed.

"Nevertheless, Professor, I do not entirely believe you. I think you are very much smitten with this protégé of yours."

"Well," said the Professor, brazenly, "do you blame me?"

The Professor's lady sighed.

"I like a more athletic boy—like Cecil," she said. And then added, with fine abnegation: "It's all on the knees of the gods."

CHAPTER IV

THE summer that ensued marked for Guido not so much a turning-point of life as a period of expansion, of amplification. It was a season of simple physical episodes and complex spiritual adventures, of material comfort and great mental stress; a season of paradoxes; of strange unrest, of ungentle awakening to the swift, terrible verities which ruthlessly inhere in life.

He left Anasquoit and arrived at Three Corners on July 5th, the most fateful date in modern history. But not a soul in Anasquoit, nor in Three Corners, nor in all America, nor in all the world for that matter, suspected the sinister import of that date; not a soul, save the handful of royal gangsters who, upon that day at Potsdam perfected their nefarious scheme to loot and pillage the world, a scheme to be launched when opportunity beckoned or, as some who place no period to the turpitude of the Potsdam marauders believe, when the opportunity had been created. The world has yet to learn whether the tragedy at Sarajevo was indeed merely the deed of a poor, deluded fanatic in patriotism, or whether it was the tail-end of a fuse lighted in Berlin—before Potsdam—and intended to dynamite the world.

Guido had paid as much and no more heed to the Sarajevo murders as the average American. It was, of course, a very shocking, very detestable episode of the sort abounding in Continental history. True, three American presidents had in the past met death by assassination, but it was felt that those tragedies had nothing in common with the Serajevo affair. That the victims in this instance had been in the Crowned Head class, degraded Serajevo to a lower—a sort of melodramatic and subhuman—milieu. The mistrust for foreign potentates bred in the American marrow inhibited America's habitual sympathy from flowing as abundantly as usual, sympathy for kings and heirs of kings being a kind of sentimental

rubbish with which Americans felt little patience excepting in the pages of a novel or on the screen.

On the whole the average American had felt inclined to pat himself patronizingly on the back and to take credit to himself for what, after all, was an accident of birth, namely that he was not of royal lineage.

The possibility of Europe's drifting into war as a vengeful upshot of the lamentable episode, seemed to occur to no one—not even to the newspaper editors, who are supposed to know everything.

On the heels of the Serajevo murder which, when the last is said, was so crudely palpable and unmysterious as to miss even the poor merit of possessing a detective story value, came the Carman murder. Here then, was a murder after the heart of the great American reading public, and its slave, the newspaper editor. Here was mystery and the romance—sordid, perhaps, but still romance—of an unhappy marriage, and two fair women involved in the plot. Decidedly, with such overwhelming odds against it, Serajevo could not hold its own in the American mind.

A surprise was in store for our hero upon his arrival at the Geddes home on Mountaintop, off Three Corners. The Geddes homestead was quite a mansion, spreading itself comfortably in mid-Victorian style to either side of the broad door, as if acreage were of no consequence whatever. The graveled walk, broad enough to accommodate a vehicle, was shaded with trees, not as large and as fine as those found in lower altitudes, but far better than most of the homes on that sparse Mountaintop settlement could boast of. The entrance to the grounds was marked by two pillars of rough stone, over which nasturtiums trailed their variegated bloom, and across these two pillars a sign was slung, bearing the inscription: "Waldheim."

Guido expressed his astonishment on glimpsing the German name.

"It's the name of the home in Hanover where Grossvater Geddes was born," said Janet, quite simply.

Guido, reduced to gaucherie by amazement, blurted out:

"Grossvater Geddes! Is your father a German? I thought your name was English."

Janet laughed.

"One would think it was a crime to be of German ex-

traction," she said. "How horrified you seem! Daddy is very proud of his German blood. And the name is one of those names which are both English and German. As the two languages have many roots in common there is really nothing so very surprising in that."

"Well, I admit I am surprised," said Guido. "You all seemed so very American to me."

"We are American, of course we are," said Janet, a little indignantly. "But one's got to have European blood of some description, hasn't one? The 'Mayflower' could not possibly have brought over the ancestors of all Americans of the present day."

"True," Guido assented.

"Mother's ancestry is partly Scotch, partly Southern," Janet continued. "Father's is German on the father's side, Yankee on the mother's. You will love Grossvater Geddes. Everybody does. Why, I wouldn't exchange Grossvater Geddes for any other granddad in the wide world."

Guido comprehended Janet's enthusiasm for her grandfather the moment he saw the octogenarian. Grossvater Geddes was slight of stature and frailly built, but the slender frame told of resilience and stamina. He was a very dainty old gentleman. He carried handkerchiefs of the sheerest linen, beautifully initialed in hand embroidery and delicately scented with Eau de Cologne. His waistcoats, too, were hand-embroidered. His shirts were delicately fluted. Indoors, for warmth, he wore short, quaint little coats exclusively tailored in golden brown, navy-blue, bottle green and taupe velvet. On coming indoors, he changed immediately from walking boots to slippers of buff suede, and in the evening he invariably wore pointed patent-leather pumps and silk hose. His complexion was as delicately white and pink as a girl's, and was set off to best advantage by his thick growth of curling, snow-white hair. His face was smooth-shaven, and one could tell at a glance that his vocation had been that of a musician. He had, in his day, enjoyed quite a reputation as a pianist and it was his custom, as Guido was to learn, to sit down at the piano at twilight and play Chopin and Beethoven and Bach.

In spite of these super-refinements of appearance and

toilet, there was about him nothing of the dandy, nothing effeminate.

His elegance in manner was as great as his elegance of person. It brought to mind the habitual and inborn elegance of a French courtier of a generation long dead and gone. And to complete the portrait, it was his habit to play continually with a small gold snuff-box, studded with rubies and emeralds. He played with it as some women play with a fan. Guido was tormented throughout an entire afternoon wondering what the jeweled trifle was.

Now the taking of snuff, like the eating of food, may be the coarsest or the most luxuriously delicate of operations; it may be a mere gorging, stuffing, cramming, or a ceremonious rite. The dear old man, we may be sure, took his snuff as daintily as the most finished of actors in a romantic play, and he partook of tobacco in no other form.

His English was heavy and clumsy, and he spoke German exclusively to his son and Janet, and more frequently than not to his daughter-in-law, who understood but could not reply in German. He addressed Guido in English, but Guido, recognizing the old man's foible, and influenced unconsciously perhaps by his dislike for imperfect diction, drifted naturally enough into the tongue of the Fatherland in replying.

"*Ach!*" Grossvater Geddes was delighted and complimented the lad upon the purity and flexibility of his German.

"Do you know, Mother," Janet said privately to her mother, "I believe that that is the real reason Daddy asked Guido up here—to please Granddaddy."

"Possibly," said Mrs. Geddes, evasively.

"He might have admitted it, then," said Janet, adding: "Do you know, Mother, I think even the best of men, like my father, are terribly stubborn at times."

To Guido she said:

"You made a hit with Grossvater Geddes, too. I shouldn't wonder if he'd invite you to his room before the week is up."

"He's invited me to come to his room this evening, after supper," said Guido.

"What, after just twenty-four hours! It's never hap-

pened before. There are folks Grossvater has known for twenty years, and they've never once crossed the threshold of his room."

"Why, what's the matter with his room?" Guido asked, curiously.

"What's the matter with his—? It's a great honor that's being paid you. What's the—? Oh, dear! I hope you'll appreciate all his treasures."

"Of course I shall," said the boy.

"It seems," said Janet, "that you've made a frightful hit with the entire Geddes family." After a moment, fearing that this avowal, which included herself, might seem forward and bold, she added: "Excepting, of course, myself."

She said it so seriously, little vixen as she was, that Guido was taken back. Considerably perturbed, he inquired:

"Do you really dislike me?" His native modesty made it seem quite likely that the most wonderful girl he had ever met shouldn't care a rap about him. "If you don't want me here, I'll go home to-morrow."

"Oh, no, I wouldn't have you do that," said mischievous Janet. "You may stay, of course, now you've come."

"I wouldn't spoil your summer for anything," said Guido.

"Who said you were going to spoil my summer?" Janet demanded. "If you go home to-morrow, Daddy will know I've done something to you."

"Then what shall I do?" Guido demanded.

"Stay, of course."

"Feeling you dislike me?"

"Silly, I never said so. Oh, Guido, are we quarreling? And what are we quarreling about?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Guido, miserably, but he did know, and Janet knew that he knew. He looked so utterly woe-begone that she decided never, never, never to tease him again.

She was tormented by a horrid, shapeless fear when, having previously gone to his room to dress for supper, he came downstairs at six o'clock and, without looking to right or left of him, dashed from the house and walked rapidly away, taking the narrow foot-path that followed the

old Indian trail down the mountain past chasms and ravines which, especially at twilight, were treacherous as well as deep.

Janet saw all this through the half-open slits of her shutter. They had all been late in dressing that day, and she had just slipped out of her morning dress and taken down her hair. Without waiting to pin up the latter, she flung herself back into the morning gingham. Then, like a desperate wild thing, she tore down the stairs and out of the house and down the dangerous path after Guido. She could not see his figure ahead of her, and she slackened her pace to observe the underbrush which consisted of mountain laurel, ragweed, huckleberry growth and witch-hazel shrubs, that lined either side of the path. Some ten paces ahead of her was an accumulation of fallen and decaying tree trunks and rocks which commanded a view of the dry bed of a mountain rill. Here, on a boulder, desolately staring at the arid scene, sat Guido.

She stole up behind him and placed her soft hands over his eyes. He did not shrink or cry out, but sat still and mute for another moment. Then he gently loosened her hand, saying:

"Janet."

"Guido. I did not mean what I said. I was teasing you. Honest. You won't be silly and go home, will you? Or have your mother send you a telegram recalling you, the way people do in books? Guido, you'll stay, won't you?"

The sweet girlish face looked very bewitching as she entreated Guido. She was a little frightened and subdued, and her eyes looked softer than was their wont, her lips were more tremulous.

One of Guido's inspirations came to him.

"I'd hate like the mischief to go away," he said, "because you see the entire family has made a tremendous hit with me—including yourself."

"Oh, Guido."

"Oh, Janet."

They laughed, and their laughter brought back the color to the boy's cheek and the mischief to Janet's eyes.

"We must go at once," she said, "it's almost supper-time and I'm not dressed."

She shook her black mane of hair as she spoke, and a strange sensation crept over the boy. The romantic trend in his nature was strong. The spot where they stood never saw daylight, for primeval pines stood all about them like hoary sentinels commissioned to keep out the tawdry light of day. At noon it was twilight here, at twilight it was dusk.

The illusory thought came to him that this was not Janet at all, not a creature of blood and flesh like himself, but some mountain elf, some water-sprite come to lure him further into the darkling woods to some mysterious and untoward fate. The spell of illusion was strong. He could not throw it off at once.

"Come," said Janet, nervous under his romancing eyes. "Come." And she plucked timidly at his sleeve.

Clasped hands swinging between them, they started up the path.

"Let's sing," said Janet. "It's so lonely in these woods after dark. Let's sing some German song—it will please Grossvater Geddes." She caught sight of a wonderful old conifer growing at the extreme brink of a deep gully, its downstretching roots more than half-revealed, and looking in its gnarled magnificence, like the eerie lair of some gnome of the woods.

To slay the uncanny feeling that was plucking at her throat, Janet burst rapturously into the song which every little German-speaking child is taught to sing standing under the Christmas Tree:

*"O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind Deine Blaetter.
Du gruenst nich nur zur Sommerzeit,
Nein, auch im Winter wenn as schneit.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind Deine Blaetter."*

Her grandfather had taught her the song when she was a little girl, and she sang it in her clear young voice, enunciating with her pretty stilted accent which made the sonorous German words seem quaintly thin and emaciated. Guido thought her accent adorable, and joined in the song reluctantly because his correct, fuller pronunciation robbed her words of their elusive, waxen charm.

Thus they reached home, hands swinging, fresh young voices raised in song. Janet's predictions concerning her grandfather were correct. The old man stood near the nasturtium-covered stone pillar waiting for them. He wore a black velvet skull-cap, soberly embroidered and tasseled with gold. His lips smiled, but a pathetic look of sorrow for griefs long dead, for recollections half-forgotten and associations only half-remembered, looked from his kindly old eyes. He took Janet's soft young face between his thin, deeply veined hands, and looked at her long and tenderly. Then, gently inclining the girl's head, he kissed her brow.

It was a simple, homely picture, entirely lacking in dramatic values, entirely lyric in essence, but it pleased the lad more than a more highly colored picture might have done. It made a lasting impression on him. He never forgot it.

That evening after supper when Grossvater Geddes rose to lead the way to his room, Guido looked questioningly at Janet.

"Oh, no," she whispered, "Grossvater Geddes wants his guests all to himself."

The room into which Guido was ceremoniously ushered by the old man was a room as quaint and mysterious of atmosphere as its occupant. And the atmosphere was distinctly Teutonic. There were beakers of all sizes made of pewter, handsomely decorated with German landscapes and castles in which Lohengrin and Tannhaeuser might have dwelt. There were figurines of porcelain, showing German peasant types and courtiers of the age of Frederick the Great. There were bookcases filled with German lexicons and classics, wood-cut reproductions of Albrecht Duerer and steel engravings after Kaulbach perpetuating scenes from Schiller, Goethe and Shakespeare. There were wonderful old pipes with beautifully painted porcelain bowls; old pastel paintings of ancestors so remote that they wore perukes and cascades of lace and coats of salmon-colored or coral-pink brocade. There was an ink-stand of Dresden china, dating back to a period when all educated Germany was under French influence, a marvelous affair, very ornate, with sand-box and quill-holders. There were silver candelabra and beautiful old salvers—

heavy old plate which had been in the Geddes family for centuries.

The old man, having displayed his treasures, poured out some good old port for his young guest, and bade him be seated.

Then, from the drawer of a marvelously carved writing desk at which Guido was sitting, he took a brace of old pistols, handsomely mounted with silver.

"I fought with these in '48," he said, simply.

Guido examined the old-fashioned weapons almost reverently.

"Many a good man whom Germany could ill spare sought refuge in America after that fateful year," the old man continued.

"I know one of them," said Guido, proud to be able to contribute actively to the conversation, "our old family physician and friend, Dr. Koenig, is an *Achtundvierziger*."

"Not Dr. Robert Koenig, from Frankfurt-on-der-Oder?"

"That's he," said Guido, nodding.

"I knew him well. We went to school together," said Grossvater Geddes. The two men had corresponded for years after reaching their mutual asylum of safety. At the time of the Civil War, when politics absorbed every thinking man, they had quarreled. The quarrel had been patched up, but the friendship had remained weak-kneed and white-corpuscled. The intervening years had now erased all impressions from Grossvater Geddes' memory save only those early ones which touched the heroic fight which he and Dr. Koenig and others had made for German freedom.

Nothing would do but Grossvater Geddes must write his old friend that very night, inviting him urgently to spend a week or a fortnight at "Waldheim." Dr. Koenig accepted and announced his visit for the following Saturday.

It was an affecting sight to see the two old men greet each other. They shook hands for about five minutes, so it seemed to the onlookers, and their emotions seemed to fluctuate between tears and laughter. They made an admirable foil one for the other. Beside dainty Grossvater Geddes, with his well-tailored, distinctive raiment, and his shell-pink and white complexion, Dr. Koenig, in

his ready-made clothes and heavy boots, looked like a weatherbeaten and rugged veteran, as he was.

"You are so strong and hale," said Grossvater Geddes to Dr. Koenig, "that you remind me of a well-seasoned old German oak."

"Why a *German* oak?" Dr. Koenig demanded, instantly chagrined. "English oaks are quite as strong and quite as fine. And so are American oaks. And so, I do not doubt, are Japanese oaks, if they happen to have oaks in Japan."

"And do you like Japan?" Grossvater Geddes inquired, in a tone of mild disapproval.

"I have never been there," said Dr. Koenig, curtly, "and as I am not of the same kidney as the critic who never read the books he reviewed for fear of becoming biased, I am incapable of forming an opinion."

"I should have asked whether you like the Japanese?"

"I have never even spoken to one," retorted Dr. Koenig. "How then can I say whether I like them or do not like them?" His tone was not entirely that of a man on the defensive.

"As a race?" persisted Grossvater Geddes.

"I argue from the particular to the general, from the individual to the race," replied Dr. Koenig. "Do you reverse that method?"

"Like the average man," Grossvater Geddes replied, "I form my opinion largely on what I read."

"Well, I don't," Dr. Koenig replied, bluntly. "I form my opinions on what I hear and see. If I have no first-hand data, I trust my heart and conscience and common sense rather than the only too often faulty judgment of others."

"And may I inquire what your heart and your conscience and your common sense tell you about the Japanese?" Grossvater Geddes inquired.

"They tell me," Dr. Koenig replied, sturdily, "that the Japanese and every other race as well is quite as good as the German race."

The energy of this reply was slightly overdone and Professor Geddes and his wife exchanged glances of alarm. The conversation was taking place at the supper-table, and it might lead none could say whither.

"May I venture to inquire—do you, when you speak of 'every other race' include the negro race?" Grossvater Geddes inquired in the meekest of tones.

"Why not?" said Dr. Koenig. "Have the negroes had a fair chance here or elsewhere? England is the only country where they are not systematically regarded as an inferior race, as a race intended by the Almighty to be a race of servitors, as a race to be badgered and despised and exploited. I am a staunch American, none stauncher, I trust, but I tell you, *alter Freund*, in its treatment of the negro this country has fallen far below its principles."

The alarm which the Professor and his wife had previously manifested became more acute. A discussion on the issues of the Civil War had brought about the rupture between the two old friends. Was a similar discussion to antagonize them anew? But before Professor Geddes could plunge into the troubled waters of the conversational stream, to stem the tide of discord, Grossvater Geddes inquired:

"May I inquire, Dr. Koenig, do you believe in the intermarriage of the white and the negro race?"

"I believe, with Lincoln, that because I am in favor of treating the negro fairly it does not follow that I want to take a negress to wife."

"Apparently," said Grossvater Geddes, sweetly, "since you are a bachelor, you did not want to take any woman to wife."

All laughed, laughed more heartily than the jest deserved in their belief that the quarrel which had seemed imminent had been averted.

Dr. Koenig said, good-humoredly:

"You have no right to assume that. The fact that I am not married is not a valid reason for supposing that I did not wish to get married. Miss Right may have refused me, or I may never have met her, or, like Barkis, she may have been willing but died before the nuptials were celebrated. Or she may have been a Mrs. Right. There are a dozen contingencies which can exculpate me from the charge of being willfully blind to the charms of the sex of which we have two such fair exemplars present."

He bowed with stately punctilio of a bygone age to Mrs. Geddes and to Janet.

"And do you really believe in the equality of all races?" Grossvater Geddes came back to the main topic abruptly.

"Well, I do and I don't," Dr. Koenig rejoined. "Politically—I mean as regards their political rights—they are equal, of course. Socially, mentally, culturally there is as wide a divergence between different races as there is between individuals of the same race."

"The mental and cultural qualifications are the points at issue, of course," said Grossvater Geddes. "I contend that the white races are superior not only to the black race, which is self-evident, but to the yellow races: especially the English, German and French are the *Kulturtraeger*."

"Strictly speaking, English, German and French are names of nations, not of races, but let it go at that. You will find, however, that each of the peoples you mention believe themselves to be the elect. You will find that each people—or race—or nation—believes firmly in its own destiny. You yourself believe in the destiny of the German people."

"Yes, I do," Grossvater Geddes assented, gravely, "I believe that our race is a very great, a very noble race. I believe with Goethe, that it is destined to achieve great things. I believe, furthermore, that every people that deserves being called great believes in its own destiny, in its mission to humanity, in the great part it is to play on the stage of the world."

Guido who, like the rest, had listened attentively but in silence so far, here broke into the conversation.

"Dostoievski says the same thing," he exclaimed. "Neither Dr. Koenig nor Herr Geddes have mentioned the Russian people. Yet they, too, are a very great people."

"They are little better than barbarians," said Grossvater Geddes. "What little culture they possess they received from Germany. Peter the Great, barbarian though he was himself, had enough foresight and wisdom to appreciate what German influence would do for Russia."

"But the Russians themselves dislike and despise German influence," said Guido. "Their bureaucratic system is the worst in the world—the most corrupt and the most dishonest. And the nomenclature by which their officials are known—*Hofrat*, *Geheimrat*, etc., show the German origin of the Russian system."

"But German officials are notoriously honest," said Grossvater Geddes, calmly, while Dr. Koenig, hugely contented, listened smilingly to this testing of the lad who was to be the political redeemer of the world.

"Yes, that is so, of course," Guido assented, and then suddenly stopped short. He had of a sudden become conscious that all eyes were fixed upon him. It occurred to him that his entry into the dialogue between the two octogenarians might justifiably be construed as impertinent. He flushed painfully, and was about to subside into shamed silence, but a reassuring smile from Professor Geddes braced him and sent him back into the arena, armed, as he felt, *cap-à-pie*. The Professor, like the Doctor, though in ignorance of the great Political Synthesis, was anxious to see the lad acquit himself creditably.

"I think, sir," said Guido, addressing Grossvater Geddes, "if you don't mind my saying so, this merely proves that no system of government or form of administration can be deliberately imported from one country and imposed upon an alien race without their consent. The Germans evolved their own system, or it was evolved for them; but it was evolved by Germans and acquiesced in by Germans. But the Russian character is different. It is multitudinous. It is a little of everything. It is everything. It is terribly intense and terribly sincere. It is capable of the most extraordinary sacrifices."

Grossvater Geddes seemed somewhat vexed.

"Do you think the German character less sincere, less capable of great devotion than the Russian?" he inquired.

"Ah, sir, I should hate to put it that way," Guido cried. "Each race, each people, has a genius of its own—excels in one way or another, and the ready-made product of one people will not do for another. A race, like an individual, must learn certain lessons for itself. Certain lessons we cannot learn vicariously. Each race has its destiny. The trouble begins when one race thinks that its destiny is also the destiny of another race."

Grossvater Geddes had listened in growing amazement to the polemics of this mere youngster.

"And what do you mean by that?" he inquired.

"I mean—well, as France did under Napoleon; or Napoleon for France."

It was evident that the boy had chosen this example so as to avoid giving further umbrage. Grossvater Geddes said:

"And as Peter the Great did?"

"Well, yes."

"And you believe that Russia's destiny is greater than Germany's?"

"It is different. The Germans excel in method, system, co-ordination, co-operation. Their ideals are—I don't mean to be offensive, sir—utilitarian and materialistic."

"Germany has always been considered the idealist among nations," Grossvater Geddes exclaimed, in an aggrieved voice.

"By themselves." Guido smiled. "Perhaps they were—once. But now they pride themselves upon quite a different quality, do they not? Now they claim to be the most economically efficient in the family of nations. That presupposes a material, not a spiritual ideal."

"It presupposes a high evaluation of spiritual attributes such as dependability, honesty, industry, frugality." The aggrievedness of the old man had deepened. Guido was silent, but his eloquent eyes showed that he was practicing chivalry, not nursing defeat.

"Guido!" Dr. Koenig leaned forward, tense with interest. "You have not yet told us—what do you conceive to be Russia's destiny?"

"I cannot say," Guido replied, slowly. "I dare say it would be difficult even for a Russian to answer that. I think, sir, the Russian ideal is freedom."

"The same as ours?" Dr. Koenig exclaimed.

"I meant—not freedom as we understand it, which is freedom from interference by others, liberty, in brief—but freedom from one's self."

"Go on," said Dr. Koenig and the Professor simultaneously, as Guido hesitated.

"I have a Russian friend," Guido resumed. "Sergius Ivanovich is a nobleman and very rich. Yet he lives here in abject poverty, refusing to touch one rouble of his vast income. He allows the peasants on his estate to profit by that income, unused by himself because unearned by himself. But his thought was not so much to help others as to divest himself of his riches, thus to strike the shackles

of the flesh from his soul, in order to give his soul a fair chance to find itself. He is the finest Christian I know. Yet he holds beliefs that would be very distasteful to the average American follower of Christianity. He is partially under Buddhistic influence, partly under the influence of religions still older and—to the American mind—more incredible. He never seems to consider his comfort and well-being. He does not think about this world. He lives in thought of the eternal. All he asks is that his soul be in unison with the Divine Principle, be of service to it, and fulfill the purpose of its being. That is happiness as he sees it. I think, but I am not sure, that he approaches the passive Buddhist ideal of Nirvana more closely than the Christian ideal of active salvation."

Dr. Koenig regarded Guido from between narrowed eyelids, a sign that he was deeply moved. He could have intoned a hallelujah. The boy with a destiny, the boy with No-Bias, the boy with a Political Synthesis to perform, was showing his mettle. The Trying out of the Experiment in Spiritual Eugenics was to be the most interesting and moving spectacle which he had ever witnessed.

Grossvater Geddes was subtly troubled. It was easy to see that Guido had opened up an entirely new vista of thought for the old man.

"All that sounds very vague," he said, feebly.

"It is vague," Guido assented, generously. "Sergius Ivanovich is vague. He is in a state of constant flux. He is the most variable person I know and the most sincere."

"But," Grossvater Geddes objected, "from what you have said I really cannot form an idea of Russia's destiny."

"Perhaps she hasn't any," said Guido, "perhaps she only thinks she has. Perhaps, again, the very fluidity which is Russia is destined to act as a leaven, a spiritualizing ferment for other nations. And—" he spoke with great gentleness, "who shall say but that the German Martha will not in the end be one of greater benefit to humanity than the Russian Mary."

Grossvater Geddes smiled. The compliment was neatly turned. He was pleased. Still the thought which Dr. Koenig and Guido had jointly planted in his heart, rankled.

"Personally," he said, "I believe that Germany has a great destiny."

"Personally," said Dr. Koenig, "I don't. I have no faith in Germany and the Germans. After 1848! After the fiasco! *Alter Freund*, how can you pin your faith to Germany after what you and I and hundreds of others went through in that dreadful, splendid, harrowing, glorious year? You are an American citizen, be an American in heart as well."

"I am, I am!" the old musician cried, excitedly. "Politically, my ideals are identified with America. I would never wish to return to Germany, or to live there, or to become a German subject again. If I had fifty more years to live, as I have barely five, I would wish to spend all of them in America. But this need not preclude my belief that the German race is the finest on earth. Americans aren't a race at all, they are merely a people."

"And you call yourself an American!" Dr. Koenig exploded, wrathfully, and Guido said, speaking with intent eagerness:

"But, sir, we are a race, a composite race, of course, but a race for all that."

The three men laughed, and Professor Geddes said, speaking for the first time:

"Well, young man, you are no better than the Germans, the French, the English or the Russians. You, too, believe in the destiny of your nation."

Guido was considerably taken aback. He tried to brazen it out, but a spasmodic "Well!" was the most eloquent retort he could produce.

Come, now, the truth. If you could, would you not impose our form of government upon all other peoples?" Professor Geddes continued.

"No," said Guido, stoutly, "why should I? The French have established a republic which suits them quite as well as our republic suits us. England, they say, is a democracy in all but name. Then why should we think that our form of government would be better for them than their own?"

"Very good," said Professor Geddes. "And tell me, Guido, do you perfectly understand the difference between a republic and a democracy? What are we? And which is the better form, and why? You used the terms loosely just now."

Guido squirmed uneasily. To have a volley of precisely

framed questions requiring precisely worded answers flung at him in the presence of almost half a dozen people gave him the sense of an examination in presence of the school-board.

Dr. Koenig leaned back contentedly in his chair. He was satisfied by this time that the boy's judgment was sound; which, of course, is only another way of saying that Dr. Koenig was certain Guido would agree with Dr. Koenig on all salient points. Had Dr. Koenig biased him? The excellent man's ear tingled as the suspicion occurred to him. He acquitted himself almost instantly of the charge. Guido had spoken of matters upon which he had never touched with the boy in conversation, deeming him much too young. Well, at any rate, the boy's judgment had proper foundation and root.

Quoth Guido in reply to Professor Geddes:

"We began life as a republic, sir, but we are now a democracy. I think a republic would be the ideal form of government if one might be sure that the men of greatest ability were also men of probity. But in a republic there is a constant danger that a hereditary aristocracy may ensue. In theory a democracy is not as good as a republic, but it is infinitely safer. And it is fairer and more honest—more humanly honest, I mean."

"Very good," said the Professor approvingly. He sought his wife's eye, then looked at Janet. The girl's eyes were bent upon Guido in mute, self-forgetful adoration. The professor experienced a pang. For a while he would have wished his little girl to reserve such looks exclusively for her parents.

Janet's expression did not escape her mother. Later, in the privacy of her apartment, she said to her husband:

"Well, Professor, your neutralizing agent seems to have a very powerful action."

"My dear!" expostulated the Professor, who had expected something of this sort from his spouse.

"Aren't you pleased?" the lady continued. "I confess, I am not nearly as much displeased as I expected to be."

"From you, Jane, that is a great deal."

"Of course, Professor, no parent considers the choice of her son or daughter just right, unless it happens to coincide with its own. Doubtless Mrs. Hauser will have a dozen

and one objections to Janet. But we live in a civilized era, and so we shall swallow our disappointment and our discontent and accept congratulations as if the match were the consummation of our most ardent desires."

"You speak as if the thing were an accomplished fact," said Professor Geddes.

"It is—as far as our daughter is concerned."

"Jane—are you tormenting me?"

"No, Professor. Now my principal fear is that the boy will not reciprocate Janet's love. There is that possibility, of course, and it is a tragic one. Janet has something of each of her parents in her make-up. We are both sentimental fools, so that she has inherited a double portion of constancy in love."

"My dear!"

"Yes, Ned. I am not ashamed to admit that if you had not loved me it should have broken my heart."

"Jane, I adored you the moment I saw you! Surely, this boy has eyes as well as heart. How could any boy help falling in love with our little girl?"

"Ah—love goeth where it listeth. The boy is fine—very. That will make it the harder for Janet if he does not love her."

"But he will—he must!" the Professor cried, quite indignantly.

His wife smiled indulgently.

"Coercion in love? How?" she inquired, ironically. "Poor Janet. She is myself at that age. The average girl is content to reflect the emotions of the man—if she pleases him well and good, if she doesn't, well and good also. But Janet's heart has initiative. Well, we will see."

"My dear, I'll ship the boy home to-morrow," cried the Professor.

"You'll do nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Geddes with determination. "You'll kindly be as nice as nice can be to him. Would you lock the stable after the colt has escaped?"

The Professor said no more. He lapsed into profound gloom. A half-hour later his wife found him sitting in the same position in which she had left him, his right boot in one hand, its mate on the left foot.

The Professor was not the only victim of overstimulated

cerebration at "Waldheim" that night. Pleasurable emotion, quite as much as abject misery, desires fellowship. Dr. Koenig had felt considerable hesitation as to his wisdom in accepting the invitation of Grossvater Geddes because he seriously doubted his own ability to observe silence concerning the Experiment. The evening's debate had strengthened his desire to take Grossvater Geddes into his confidence a hundredfold. Old Herr Geddes had known Guido the First, and would be as interested as Dr. Koenig himself as to the outcome of Guido's education. The interest which Dr. Koenig felt was as far removed from vulgar curiosity as can be; it was a superlatively refined emotion possible only to one who like himself had an unappeasable hunger for everything pertaining to the evolution of the race. Most persons were sciolists or vulgarians or both. It would be casting pearls before swine to apprise such as these of the Great Experiment. But his *alter Freund* was not merely a connoisseur in music and art, he was a connoisseur in human nature as well, though, according to Dr. Koenig's opinion, he was not a judge.

In brief, the honest old physician found himself that evening in the unenviable position of a man seated before a bottle of rare old wine, with no one to bear him company. Until midnight he tossed uneasily on his pillow. Then he rose to prepare himself a sleeping powder. His room adjoined that of Grossvater Geddes. The two old friends were in a wing by themselves, a broad hall dividing their rooms from the other sleeping apartments.

Dr. Koenig heard something scratch at his door. He thought it a mouse and reached for his boot. Just then the scratching was augmented by a whisper.

"I cannot sleep," whispered the voice of Grossvater Geddes. "Can you?"

Dr. Koenig cautiously opened his door and was invited into the adjoining apartment by means of opulent signs. The two old men, wrapped in their bathrobes, tiptoed into the larger of the two apartments.

"Let us talk a little more," said Grossvater Geddes, "it is so long since we have seen each other." And he produced his historic port.

There is a limit to human endurance. The wine of rare

vintage undermined what remained of Dr. Koenig's virtuous resolution to say nothing about the Experiment. He unbosomed himself concerning the Synthesis to his old friend, who listened as attentively as Dr. Koenig could have wished. Dawn streaked the horizon with pallid lines of light before the two old friends finally separated.

Their new secret helped to bridge the wide gulf of years which had separated them. They thoroughly enjoyed their holiday. They bickered a good deal, it is true, but life had taught both moderation, and although there was much spirited debate, there was no anger. They enjoyed bickering; they enjoyed even more their mutual and individual recollections of the Year Forty-eight. That, after all, had been the pivotal point of their existence.

Guido loved to sit with the two old men and listen to their reminiscences. He learned from them by word of mouth more of the import of modern German history than he had learned at school. Some facts were merely glanced at, hinted at. But Guido was shrewd. Names fell from the lips of the two old men uttered with reverence and admiration which had been deemed of such trivial importance in school that Guido had not even memorized them. Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, Stein, Hardenburgh, Andreas Hofer were referred to again and again. Guido gleaned from what he heard that these had been men of exalted virtue, true world patriots, men of whom any race and any country might have been proud, men who touched the summit of courage and civic unselfishness. Why had so little been made of them by teacher and text-book? Why so much of the monotonous procession of Kurfuersts, Princes and Kings? He heard for the first time of Lieutenant Klatt, the friend of Frederick the Great, at whose execution Frederick, then Crown Prince, had been forced to be present by his father, a piece of revolting barbarity rendered the more odious by the fact that the crime for which Klatt was condemned to suffer death consisted in helping the Crown Prince in his attempt to escape from the parental roof. His home had been rendered insufferable to Frederick owing to the vulgarities and brutalities of his woefully under-educated and tyrannical father, whose sole relaxation consisted in orgies of smoking, and who beat the Prince unmercifully with his own flute, an

instrument which, since it presupposed refinement of taste, was disapproved of by the king.

Guido, it must be remembered, had been taught German history very thoroughly. But he had been taught it in a German school, calling itself German-American, by German teachers and from German text-books. He became so far interested in checking up the disparities of German history as he had learned it and as these two old men diagnosed it and partly had lived it that he wrote home, asking his mother to send him his old German history. He re-read it one night. It dawned upon him then, during that night's vigil, that the woof of history quite as much as the woof of a tangible fabric, can be colored. The complexion of the history of Germany—so it seemed to him now—had always appeared odd when the deadly moral parallel of American history was applied to it. It now seemed not merely odd but reprehensible. The day was near at hand when its enormity, its preposterousness was to burst upon the boy in a blaze of unholy light.

Dr. Koenig had been invited for a week or a fortnight or for as long as he would stay. He loitered on at "Waldheim," prolonging his visit from day to day, from week to week.

Cecil Lewes, the English boy whom Guido had been invited to neutralize, arrived a week after Dr. Koenig. He was a fair, shy boy, with a face like a girl's. Guido had never met an English boy before, and in thinking of the English, had made the mistake which the average German-American makes—he thought the Englishman an accentuated variety of the Anglo-American. He was surprised to find Cecil's savor distinctly different from that of the American boys whom he had known. He was for one thing less sophisticated and less slangy. He showed an innocent zest in life and a sensitiveness to fine shades that delighted Guido. With it all Cecil was the least emphatic person Guido had ever come in contact with. His manner of saying things, even things in which his own interest was keen, was diffident. Yet somehow he never failed of his effect. His manner was so very diffuse and inconsequential that at times it seemed light, even flippant. Yet Cecil was neither light nor flippant. He was flippant as little as he was emphatic.

Guido liked Cecil's way of doing things—his way of speaking, of walking, of moving about. He was a very well-bred lad, and Guido thought Cecil's manner toward his elders and toward Mrs. Geddes and Janet the last word in perfection although his own, if he had only known it, was quite as good.

The enzyme of No-Bias was in serious jeopardy those days.

Cecil, being English and athletic, was an indefatigable walker. He suggested a day's walking-tour one morning after breakfast. Guido had been the merest amateur at pedestrianism, but, Dr. Koenig being out of ear-shot, he threw prudence to the winds and went off with Janet and Cecil for a day's tramp.

He was desperately tired the next day, but not ill. Dr. Koenig, however, who had been terribly exercised on learning that Guido had gone off for a day's hike, insisted upon his resting in bed the better part of the next day, explaining to Cecil that the day's tramp, with an hour at the oars thrown in for good measure, might have proved disastrous for Guido. Cecil showed little concern. Dr. Koenig thought him callous whereas he was merely practicing the Anglo-Saxon's shibboleth of showing no emotion when most profoundly moved.

A few days later he asked Guido:

"I say, what made you go for that long tramp when you knew it might make you most awf'ly ill?"

"I really haven't bothered to analyze my motive in going," Guido replied, lazily sucking at a sassafrass root. They were sitting in the gully under the lofty conifers near the tiny rill, which, since there had now been plenty of rain, leaped gayly from stone to stone, flashing like mercury.

"Well, if you don't mind, I wish you would analyze them," Cecil rejoined. "I'm awf'ly interested."

"Why should I mind?" Guido asked. "But I'm disgustingly lazy just now. So continue your prodding. It may help me to think."

Cecil laughed his shy, noiseless laugh.

"Were you—I hope you don't mind my suggesting it—were you too proud to let me know about your trouble?"

"No. I hope I'm not disappointing you—but I never thought about being ashamed of it at all."

"Were you—mind you, I'm questioning you with your express permission—were you in a defiant mood, Guy?"

Guido pondered this.

"I believe," he said, finally, "that mentally as well as physically I am too flaccid for defiance. I'm afraid there isn't a grain of defiance in me."

"I don't think that's a deficiency you need regret," said Cecil. "I detest defiant persons. They are forever ferreting about for something to vex them. Perhaps you mistrusted your physician's judgment."

"Never thought of old saw-bones," said Guido. "I don't mean dear old Doc Koenig by that, but the New York chap who painted my future in such funereal colors."

"I'm afraid my ingenuity is exhausted," said Cecil. "I have no more suggestions to make."

"It was like this," said Guido, suddenly alert. "It wasn't a matter of thought at all—just pure feeling. There are many things I've wanted to do all my life and didn't do because I was told it would be suicidal to do them. Hurts horribly, a physical disability like that. I think I went for that hike, though I knew it was bound to make me uncomfortable even if it did not seriously injure me, because I was so sick and tired of the pain of holding back."

Cecil listened with an abstracted air.

"That's rather a good reason," he said. "I've got to think that over. Do you know?" he demanded suddenly, "you aren't the least bit like other Americans I've met."

Guido's pleasure in being termed an American was marred by Cecil's comparison.

"I'm sorry you do not think me a real, thorough American," he said.

"I didn't mean that," said Cecil, quickly. "Of course, you're a good American—all that sort of thing, but the American boys I met were mostly interested in football and things like that. I like cricket and golf myself. But there are other things, too. Americans don't seem interested in getting at the bottom of things the way Europeans are. I think it's because the States is such a jolly good country to live in—folks are so busy just living and getting

all the fun they can out of life that they don't care a fig for analyzing life and talking it over the way Europeans do. They think it's a little morbid to do that."

"I am afraid you do not entirely approve of America," said Guido, feeling a sickish sensation in the pit of his stomach. He liked this English boy immensely, but he was ready to withdraw his esteem at the first intimation of hostile censure of America and Americans.

"I approve of them thoroughly, and I like them thoroughly," Cecil replied, "but it is with them as I say. I think they are the most warm-hearted and the kindest people in the world. Indeed, I do not know what would have become of me when my poor parents died if my American cousins hadn't taken me in."

"American or Canadian?"

"American—though they are living in Canada. They've been so awfully generous with me, quite incredibly generous in every way. Much as they love their own country they've never once urged me to become an American citizen when I come of age. And they gave me the choice between an English university and an American college. I chose Anasquoit College because it's quite the best of its kind and it would cost infinitely more to send me abroad to study."

"And—if you don't mind *my* asking—are you going to become an American citizen?"

"I don't know," said Cecil, uncertainly. "I'm tremendously in doubt. I love England. I love America. This is the way I put it to myself: If, in case of war between the two countries, I should not care to fight for America, and against England, then I have no right to ask for admission to American citizenship."

"Why imagine such a horrible thing?" Guido asked, frowning.

"Well, you ought to be able to sympathize with me," Cecil answered. "I imagine you'd have a few bad moments if America and Germany ever went to war."

Guido stared.

"Why," he stammered, "what's Germany to me?" He was almost too amazed for speech. "You have no notion how I love my own country," he said, a little indignantly,

"if you can suppose that I would waver in my allegiance for the hundredth part of a second."

"The feeling of race is strong in all of us," said Cecil.

"I don't believe in race prejudice," said Guido. He was now launched on his favorite topic. "Why, that's just why America is so wonderful—because all races unite to make her great. Think of the number of races represented in the United States!"

"We have as many or more in the British Empire," said Cecil.

"With this difference," said Guido, proudly. "The British Empire accepted them where they found them. To us, however, to America, these different races send their best elements, and they are absorbed willingly into our national life, glad of finding here a haven."

"Well, a good many Europeans think you are absorbing not the best of Europe but her scum." Cecil's thoughtfulness robbed his words of all offensiveness.

"Do the English think so?"

"I think not—at least not the more intelligent English. The man in the street, him, I mean, who is little better than the scum he despises, may think so. But on the Continent—I'm sorry, but it's true—the educated classes do more or less take this view."

"But why in heaven's name should they?"

"Well, frankly, Guy, this conglomeration of races in the States is the one thing I don't like. In the British Empire the different races are more or less segregated in distinct geographical areas. I think that's safer. I hope I'm not offending you by my frankness."

"I'm intensely interested," said Guido, leaning on his elbow.

"I believe in race—not race prejudice, but race culture."

"I don't understand," said Guido.

"It's like this," said Cecil. "Some races are more highly gifted than others—one cannot get around that. Too great an influx of inferior elements may in time undermine racial health. The best can only be achieved if a great race is not handicapped too far, isn't impeded beyond a certain point. There must be a certain unity of thought and a harmony of feeling if the best results are to be achieved."

"Results in what?" Guido inquired.

"In everything—in whatever the particular race excels in."

"I really do not see what handicap can arise from different races foregathering here as they do," Guido exclaimed.

"Well, in the first place," Cecil began, slowly, "the different races do not entirely amalgamate even in America. You have Italian colonies and Greek colonies and French colonies right in the heart of New York City. And the Germans are notoriously clannish. The Chinese keep to themselves, and so the Armenians, the Japs and the negroes."

"That may be true of the first generation," said Guido, "but I think the second generation is partly absorbed and the third generation is not only absorbed but actually assimilated."

"Possibly," Guido conceded, "but I do not see what you gain. I don't see how many different elements can be fused."

"They inject new blood," suggested Guido.

"New blood is not necessarily an advantage, providing the old blood was good," said Cecil, doggedly determined to defend his point.

"Ah," cried Guido, "then you, too, think that the scum of Europe comes to our shores?"

"By no means," said Cecil, "but I do believe, in fact I think it is an incontrovertible truth, that the emigrants are as a rule not highly educated representatives of their respective races."

"Well——" Guido flung out.

"Now," said Cecil, "I'm too English, you know, too democratic, you understand, to believe that the most highly educated folks are necessarily the most desirable. My dear mother, who died when I was only twelve, never tired of teaching me to respect the rights of others, however humble their walk of life, and to esteem their latent possibilities. She taught me that the pauper's child may possess qualities of heart and mind which place him higher in the human scale than the babe in the royal cradle—or myself. I am grateful to her for teaching me that." The English boy fell silent for a moment. Then he continued:

"You spoke of America as a haven for aliens. If they

really look upon America as that—if only the courage of despair sends them to your shores, then I'm afraid you are getting the scum of Europe all nicely spotted and streaked with yellow."

"And what may you be driving at?" Guido inquired.

"But if the spirit of adventure sends them across the seas, or if they come because they think your political principles are right, then, by all means, you are getting if not the best yet at least very desirable blood."

"And why do you rate the spirit of adventure as high as all that?" Guido demanded.

"Because," Cecil rejoined, "it has made the British Empire what it is to-day. It has made America what it is. The Puritans of New England——"

"Came here to worship as their conscience dictated," Guido interrupted his friend, almost violently. "Didn't they?"

"I've often wondered," said Cecil, thoughtfully. "I've often wondered if there was not some undercurrent stronger than the ostensible reason. I mean the unconscious yearning after new experiences, after adventure, in brief."

Guido did not reply. The thought was startlingly new and left him bewildered. His mind often recurred to it.

This is a fair sample of the conversations that took place almost daily between these two young men. There is not a choicer emotion, if emotion it may be termed, than the pleasure derived from intellectual companionship. Before the first week had passed the two boys had become fast friends.

Professor Geddes and his wife were hospitality incarnate. The house was spacious, the servants dependable, the Professor's purse more than comfortably lined.

So when Janet, whose imagination had been fired by Guido's references to Dobronov, suggested that the Russian be invited, Mrs. Geddes willingly consented. Perhaps she was seeking to neutralize the only too obvious effect of Guido.

"Guido," said Janet, seating herself on the couch in her father's library, where Guido, comfortably snuggled in a morris chair, sat reading his beloved Macaulay, "Mother

would like you to invite your Russian friend for a weekend, if you care to."

Guido did not at once reply. He had a keen sense of the fitness of things and of human beings, and he did not think that Sergius Ivanovich would fit in at all with the Geddes family. He was sensitive for Dobronov and he feared that Janet might find him ridiculous or even contemptible.

"Well," said Janet, "you don't seem to take kindly to the plan. Fine sort of a friend you are. I should think you'd be glad to have Mr. Sergius What's-His-Name up here for a few days."

"I think I had better not ask him," said Guido, rousing himself. "Your father and mother might think him, well, queer."

"And would I think him queer also?" Janet demanded.

"I think so."

"Then it's on my account you won't ask him," said Janet. "That's not very flattering for me. Daddy says you are one of the rarely endowed creatures—Daddy's words and thought, not mine, if you please—who think a spiritual sin worse than the other kind. He said you'd sooner forgive—always quoting Daddy, you comprehend—a weakling's gross indulgence in his appetites, whatever that may mean, than a woman who laughed when she hadn't orter."

"And are those 'Daddy's' words also, 'hadn't orter?'" Guido inquired, ironically.

"Don't attempt to sidetrack me, sir," said Janet, sternly. "That's what my Daddy said, in substance. Now, answer me! "Do you think I'd be so ill-natured and so ill-bred and so unkind and so—well, ill-natured and ill-bred and unkind as to laugh at any friend of yours? Or at anybody, for that matter?"

"No, of course not," said Guido weakly, telling one of the white lies which the subject of this discussion, and Otto as well, held in such detestation. "Of course not," he repeated, more vigorously.

Janet flounced up from the couch.

"I've hit the nail on the head," she cried. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Guido Hauser!" And she flung

from the room, whether in real or simulated anger, Guido could not tell.

As a matter of fact, Janet had hit the nail on the head. He had not felt certain of how she would treat Dobronov. Janet, under the glass of daily observation, had been a daily revelation. She changed her moods with disconcerting frequency. She perplexed Guido. He had never met so mercurial and volatile a creature. He felt dimly that the term changeable must not be applied to her, for her variability was due not to capriciousness, which is the mutability of the frivolous and the shallow, who bend like reeds to every gust of fashion or passion, but was the upshot of a singularly rich and splendid character in process of evolution and growth, a character in which divergent but not conflicting elements had not yet been harmonized into a well-poised entirety.

Guido, after deliberating a moment, laid aside his book and went in search of Janet. He found her in the orchard, embroidering under a wide-spreading apple-tree.

"Well," she demanded, "have you come to ask my forgiveness?"

"Why should I?" he inquired, sitting down at her feet in the sweet-smelling clover which spread a luxurious pink and white carpet under the gnarled and knotted old tree. "What have I done? I have not injured you."

"In thought—can you deny it?" Janet inquired, holding her embroidery at arm's length, to admire the effect.

"If you chose to consider it an affront that I preferred to keep my friend at a distance because I feared he would be distasteful to you, I cannot help it," said Guido, feeling that, after all, that was the truth—or one angle of it.

"Ah," said Janet, "you are clever. Very."

"Clever?" Guido echoed. "Is that another way of telling me that I am insincere?"

Janet smiled ravishingly.

"It was my intention to offend you as little as it was yours to offend me," she said, a sweet smile on her lips. But her eyes looked hot and angry and pained.

Guido bit his lip. Nothing was to be gained by this sort of charge and counter-charge. He admired Janet's shrewdness, but he was by no means persuaded that she

would not think Dobronov a sort of animated joke. Finally he felt a brute at thought of having offended her.

"Janet!"

"Guido?"

"Janet, I humbly beg your pardon for hurting you. I would not hurt your feelings for worlds."

"Not for worlds, but for the truth."

"I ask you to forgive me."

"I forgive you because you ask forgiveness."

"That is generous of you. If you still wish it, I will invite Dobronov."

"It is, of course, a matter of indifference to me whether you do or not. My mother, in suggesting the invitation, merely desired to let you know that your friends were as welcome at "Waldheim" as yourself. It was a compliment to you. Supposing we drop the subject. Did you ever see clouds so white or a sky so blue? An Italian sky, Grossvater Geddes calls it. It's a perfect day."

Guido turned pale with the turbulence of his emotions. Why did his pulses leap so, his temples beat so furiously? Why did he feel so pitifully small and young and silly? Janet's manner was magnificent. The boy realized from the soft gentleness and dignity with which she spoke how deep was the smart which he had inflicted.

"Janet!"

"Guido?"

"Janet, you haven't forgiven me. No, I don't mean that. You say you have and your word is your bond. But, please forgive me!" he floundered about hopelessly. He was generations younger than she at the moment though their ages were identical. Never had he seen her so superbly womanly, so divinely self-controlled, so flawlessly beautiful. Perhaps, since he was in the bondage of adolescence, her beauty, even more than her spiritual worth, tied a knot in his throat and sent his mental thermometer down to zero.

And suddenly, overwhelmingly he felt that he owed her the truth and not mere fragments of it.

"Janet, I'll confess—I was afraid you might poke fun at Dobronov. It was horrid of me. Forgive me."

Janet did not reply at once, and he thought that he had made her angry anew. Then she looked up at him and

saw that although her mouth was still grave and dignified, her eyes were dancing with merriment and amusement. There was a strange light in her eyes, too, a light which Guido had never seen in any human eye before, for as yet he knew nothing of the light which love sets to burning and to flaming in a woman's eyes.

"Guido," said Janet, "you foolish boy, can we never enjoy the luxury of a little tiff without your making yourself sick over it? I wanted to punish you a wee bit and I've all but annihilated you. There now, it's all right."

The girl's voice did not match her bantering words. It was tender, not merry.

"I'm not a wee bit hurt now, Guido," she added, giving him another glimpse of the heaven that was mirrored in her eyes.

Guido sat very still. A wonderful something had happened to him, an ineffable, unnamable, unimagined experience had befallen. His heart felt strained and queer with sheer joy.

He wrote Dobronov that very night, who, since his Bieguny views did not preclude visits to well-to-do establishments, accepted the invitation for the following weekend.

When Friday morning arrived, Janet announced that she intended taking the chauffeur's place in going to the station. Early in the afternoon she came out to her father, who was sitting on the porch, with a childish woe-begone face.

"Mother's bought five crates of tomatoes at thirty-five cents each," said Janet, "and she wants me to stay home and help with the preserving instead of going down for Mr. Dobronov."

"Then notify Charlie to go in your place. The weeding can wait."

"I was hoping you would say it couldn't," said Janet, in a very small voice. "Mother has Maggie to help her, you know, and I never did any preserving in my life."

Professor Geddes regarded his daughter with humorously shrewd eyes.

"Are you by any chance trying to convey to me your desire to be relieved from kitchen duty?"

"Yes, Daddykins."

Professor Geddes removed his glasses and polished them with great gusto.

"Daughter," he said, "I think there are two valid reasons why you should stay. Five crates of tomatoes represent considerable work—your presence in the kitchen is therefore not as ornamental as you may think. Besides, your mother wishes you to remain. Am I right?"

"Yes, Daddy," Janet replied after a moment's hesitation, and vanished to the kitchen.

Guido, who had pretended to hear nothing of this conversation, thought:

"Is it possible this little girl and the fine lady who made me so miserable the other day are one and the same human being?"

When, late that afternoon, the automobile which had been sent to the station for Dobronov hove in sight, Janet, spotlessly attired in white, the five crates of tomatoes having meanwhile found their way into Mason jars, was concerned to see only Charlie, the chauffeur, and Guido in the big touring car. Some sort of outfit—Janet could not tell of what nature the gear was—was packed in the body of the car.

She ran down to meet the car, as it drove into the wide circle of their private road.

"Didn't he come?" she demanded.

Guido, a smile on his face, jumped from his seat and removed the gear from the car.

"He came all right," he replied, working as he talked, and explained that Dobronov had insisted on walking the three miles up the mountain because to ride in a high-power car was against his principles.

"It's a pity we didn't think to borrow an antediluvian one-horse shay for the occasion," said Professor Geddes.

"Let's go down the road and meet him," Janet suggested. Cecil declined to go, so Guido and Janet went off alone.

They discovered Dobronov quarter of a mile down the road. He had stopped at a brook to wash the dust from his face and hands, and was drying the latter in a large clean handkerchief, evidently carried for the purpose, just as Janet and Guido came upon him.

"I intended that you should see me after my toilet was

made, not during it," Dobronov said, with more gallantry than Guido had thought him capable of.

"I wouldn't have missed the scene for worlds," Janet assured him. "It was like a sunset scene in a rural play. I hope you don't mind the comparison, Mr. Dobronov."

"Why should I? Life is full of dramatic and pictorial values," Dobronov replied, calmly, and proceeded to describe an incident of Russian peasant life which he had witnessed years ago by chance, and which had lingered in his memory because of the dramatic possibilities suggested by it.

Guido heaved a sigh of relief. Things were going infinitely much better than he had dared anticipate.

At supper Dobronov explained that he had brought a magic lantern belonging to a friend, with slides showing Russian scenes which he thought might be of interest to his hostess and her family.

"I have thought to bring everything I need," he said, addressing Mrs. Geddes; "sheet, oil for the lantern and the frame for the sheet. All I must ask of you is the space in which to erect my outfit."

Mrs. Geddes assured him that he was welcome to as much space as he needed, adding:

"If you make yourself indispensable to us by entertaining us, Mr. Dobronov, I threaten we will not allow you to escape us on Monday."

"Ah, Madame, my religious beliefs prohibit my accepting your hospitality for longer than three or four days."

"Do you then think it wrong to remain in one place for more than a few days?" Janet inquired.

"Not that—but——" Dobronov glanced uneasily at the well-appointed table, with its immaculate napery, its fine porcelain, its beautiful silver and its abundance of wholesome, well-prepared food. "It is very pleasant—very—to eat amply of a variety of good food. In my home in Russia, we, of course, lived well also. But I ran away from my home and its material pleasures to become acquainted with my soul. Yet, so overlaid was my spirit with the material and the mundane that, although I have been away from home now for almost twelve years, I have not yet found my soul's place in the universe. That will come in time. In the meantime, I must do nothing

to hazard what little progress I have made on the road of spirituality."

"But, surely," Janet exclaimed, "you must eat wherever you are!" She was horrified as only the young who have known opulence all their lives can be horrified at the thought of insufficient nourishment.

"Oh, yes, of course! But I do not eat such food as you do. I live one day on oatmeal, a second day on potatoes, a third day on turnips, a fourth on cabbage, a fifth on fried liver. All cheap foods, you see, and to me not over-palatable."

The table stared, and Guido became vaguely uneasy. Professor Geddes remarked after a moment of tense silence:

"Well, if that is the only reason why you cannot stay longer than three days, Mr. Dobronov, I dare say my wife can so arrange things that you have rice one day, and hominy the next, and baked tomatoes the third. Or, if those foods are too luxurious, there are a lot of edible weeds in the meadow beyond, as I discovered from a botany the other day, which are warranted to taste bad and cost nothing."

Janet perceived the droll drift of her father's reply and glanced apprehensively at Guido. But Guido smiled at her reassuringly. The Professor possessed the secret of injecting an indefinable sweetness into his whimsicality which enabled him to "poke fun" at others without fear of giving offense.

Sergius Ivanovich was entirely deficient in the sense of humor. He accepted the Professor's statement at face value.

"In that case," he said, "I shall, of course, be happy to remain longer."

"Still," said Janet, quite seriously, "I do not understand in the least why your soul should be affected by the food you eat."

"Ah," said Dobronov, "you do not know what poverty really means or you would not say that. In the first place, abstention from pleasure—and gustatory enjoyment is a very keen pleasure—means mortification of the flesh. Which is good for all of us. Then, too, I refrain from eating rich, agreeable food because there are so many poor

people in Russia who have not enough to eat. Formerly I thought of those people incessantly. And the misery which I knew they were enduring kept me from thinking about my soul. I then decided to become poor myself, and now I live as the poor do and their miseries have ceased to trouble me. I am free at last to ponder about the Infinite."

Again silence fell upon the table.

Mrs. Geddes thought: "How morbid these foreigners are."

Janet thought: "I believe Guido's Sergius is right. I'm going to try it some day."

Grossvater Geddes thought: "Religious imbecility! These Russians are either voluptuaries or mystics."

Dr. Koenig thought: "With Dobronov as a friend, Guido has surely had enough religious nonsense offered for his inspection to comply with the most rigorous demands of No-Bias. Heavenly Synthesis! How will it all work out?"

Cecil thought: "If this is a sample of the human material offered to America for digestion, I'll not forego my birthright as a Britisher."

Guido thought: "Now they *are* thinking old Dob and his religious scruples a joke. And I don't blame them. I wish to goodness he'd keep his conscience to himself."

Professor Geddes, after quite a long pause, remarked, judicially:

"You will forgive a man who is a good deal older than yourself, I hope, for venturing a criticism. If your abstention from material pleasures is merely the purchase price of religious exaltation, aren't you laying yourself open to the charge of being a spiritual sensualist? You know, Mr. Dobronov, I have always thought that the unkempt, unshaven, unwashed man who sleeps on the park bench and takes no thought of the morrow is your true Hedonist. He has achieved the lowest rung of the ladder, so that fear of a further declension cannot trouble him. And, having nothing in the world to worry about, he can enjoy the Paradise of his own thoughts to the uttermost. It's in our mind, you know, that our true existence takes place."

"Heavens," Dobronov cried, "what things people do

say." He seemed frightfully startled. "Why, sir, do you propound such a terrific problem to me? Oh, I shall be crushed by my religious doubts. Am I indeed nothing but a spiritual voluptuary? It may be. It may be."

Mrs. Geddes threw a look of mingled alarm and admonition at her husband.

"Don't mind the Professor, Mr. Dobronov," she said, kindly. "He doesn't mean half he says. He frequently talks nonsense."

"My dear!" mildly expostulated the Professor.

"Well, Daddy, don't you?" Janet inquired, composedly. "You know you wouldn't have said a thing like that in class. Now, would you? That's the acid test," she explained to Dobronov.

"In class," said the Professor composedly, "I teach history, not philosophy. Mr. Dobronov, you have it on the best authority—my wife and my daughter—that my statements are untrustworthy. Pray dismiss what I said from your mind."

Guido wondered a little at Dobronov's forethought in bringing the magic lantern. It did not seem like Sergius Ivanovich to think of anything so frivolous as mere amusement. The subjects on the slides, however, explained Dobronov's lapse into levity. They represented scenes from Russian peasant life, showing the unbelievable poverty in which an enormous number of Russians live. There were slides showing large holes dug into the earth in which the peasants of some villages live all the year round. There were scenes showing the interior of prisons, the condition of prisoners, chastisement with the knout. All of the slides perpetuated scenes difficult and expensive to procure. Guido guessed the truth before Dobronov told it him. A friend of Dobronov's, Vasalov, had brought these scenes to New York with him from Russia. He intended to tour the country during fall and winter, and to use these slides for propaganda purposes among the Russians in America. The name Vasalov conveyed little to Guido. Dobronov had spoken of Vasalov occasionally. Frau Ursula never. In no way did he connect Vasalov with himself. He had totally forgotten his meeting with Vasalov when a child.

Among the slides were quite a number showing "politicals" en route for Siberia. One projection showed

a forbidding-looking building, a castle or a fortress, which Dobronov attempted to withdraw without his usual painstaking elucidation. Professor Geddes challenged his haste.

"It is the fortress at Schlüsselburg, which is now used as a prison," Dobronov replied in answer to the Professor's inquiry.

"Of any special significance?" inquired the Professor.

"The Princess Vasalov has been imprisoned here, in this cell," he indicated the spot with his pointer, "for fifteen years."

"And who is the lady?" inquired the insatiable Professor, causing Dobronov to curse the malignity of fate that, through some chance, had spirited this slide back into his case, for he had been under the impression that he had removed it.

"She is a cousin of Prince Vasalov, an intimate friend of mine, and like him, a famous revolutionist, a woman of high principle, of transcendent ability and energy, and quite famous among revolutionists."

"Why famous?" The Professor's thirst for knowledge threw Dobronov almost into despair.

"Because she is—or was—a very successful bomb-thrower. She has to her credit the assassination of five high functionaries."

"And do you approve of that?" inquired Professor Geddes. "I thought you were a disciple of Non-Resistance."

"I am. I detest violent measures. But you see, she is as sincere in her beliefs as I am in mine," said Dobronov, simply.

"It seems to me that is carrying tolerance too far," said Guido, his young face was stern and set. "Murder is murder. How can you speak of high principles in this connection, Sergius Ivanovich? The man or woman who commits murder is simply a——"

"You must not call Varvara Alexandrovna that——" Dobronov, very pale, spoke with unwonted haste.

"Varvara Alexandrovna," said Guido, more mildly. The beauty of sound had caught his ear and for the moment he gave no thought to the iniquity of the woman owning so lovely and so regal a name. "What a beautiful name," he said.

"Yes," Dobronov assented, "and you must believe me when I tell you that her nature is as splendid as her name. She sincerely believes that she and the party she represents have chosen the only method for freeing the Russian people from the insufferable yoke which the bureaucrats have fastened upon them. And think, Guido Guidovich, what she has suffered all these years—in solitary confinement—in this cell!"

Guido frowned. He said no more. Was he touched by Dobronov's plea and merely ashamed to admit it? Or did he still condemn Varvara Alexandrovna?

Later, when good-night was being said, Janet said to Guido:

"I really do not know why you were so afraid to introduce your friend to us. He is the most entertaining man I have ever met."

"Entertaining or amusing?"

"I said entertaining. I came near saying 'fascinating.' If I didn't, it's because you might have resented it."

Guido, usually not obtuse, hardly dared to pluck the obvious meaning from Janet's words. Her color confirmed that meaning. She said, the mood of the hoyden as usually following a spontaneous outbreak of innocent coquetry:

"Now don't imagine that I meant that as a compliment to you, because I didn't. It was nothing but—well—my usual flipness."

"Flipness!" The home-coined word amused Guido and he laughed.

Janet, her disarranged self-control restored by Guido's hilarity, said:

"I supposed him to be old and ugly and generally impossible. And I find him excellent company, young and nice-looking—almost as pretty in his way as Grossvater Geddes is in his."

"Pretty! What a word to apply to a man."

"Your friend or Grossvater Geddes? Why should Grossvater Geddes object? At his age men are usually plain horrors."

"Still——"

"I'm sorry you object to the word," said Janet with the coy demureness which promised mischief. "You know, in your way, you are pretty, too."

"Well, if Grossvater Geddes' age removes the sting from the word, so must my youth. I trust I may outgrow the outrage in time."

"And grow into it again at Grossvater Geddes' age," said Janet. Looking up, she laughed deliciously.

Guido did not reply but stood regarding her with piercingly eloquent eyes. Her own grew soft and humid under his gaze. They stood thus for a minute, their glances interlocked, intertwined, embracing. The intimacy, at this moment, which existed between them was as strong but far more delicate than if they had indulged in the osculatory exercises in which the highest felicity of young people is supposed to consist. The diffidence, the shyness, the modesty of youth bound them about and held them captive to the disembodied blandishment. With a mutual sigh—one of those unconscious sighs which seem to cleave the heart—their eyes released each other. They became aware again of finite things—time: ten-thirty; place: the lower hall; environment: half a dozen persons in the room beyond.

"Good-night," said Janet, softly.

"Good-night, Janet," the boy responded.

She said "Good-night" once more, without speaking his name. It sounded to him like a consecration or a benediction. Then she went upstairs to her room.

Guido could not sleep. Brain and blood were both hammering furiously, he knew not why. He sought the solitude of the library there to embark upon his first venture into the wilds of literature.

The library was a large, square room, situated in an extension which had been built to accommodate it. It was quite pretentiously furnished, being, as Mrs. Geddes said, the handsomest room in the house, with the exception of Grossvater Geddes' museum-sleeping-sitting-room. Guido had spent far less time here than he anticipated. On the morning after his arrival he had asked Professor Geddes to instruct him in his tasks.

"Tasks?" The professor had inquired with a mildly innocent air which he affected at times. "Did you say 'tasks'? My dear lad, rest up for a week, get acclimated, before you speak to me of tasks again."

A week later Guido had accordingly repeated his request.

"My dear lad, I'm not in the mood for work to-day. Are you? If you are, you'll have to go into yonder adjacent field and dig up tree-stumps. In the country I never work unless I feel like it. We'll start tasks on a rainy day."

On the first rainy day, which happened along in the second week, Guido again presented himself at the library door.

"Come in, come in," Professor Geddes cried, as if greeting a visitor. "What, you came here to work? Work at what? Oh, for me? My dear lad, what a glutton for work you are. This is the first rainy day we've had, and that's always an event. Do you play chess? Good! Let's have a game."

They played chess until dinner. Then it cleared and the entire family went for a drive. After supper the Professor and Guido again played chess until bedtime.

Finally, by dint of much diplomacy and tact, Guido had wormed out of the Professor the system in which he wanted his books catalogued. After that Guido put in a couple of hours every day, clandestinely for the greater part, for it was quite impossible to work when the Professor was in the library. He wanted to talk, or to play chess, or to ask questions; sometimes, too, he wanted the library to himself. Morning after morning he bundled Guido off and morning after morning, while Janet was busy about the house helping her mother, Guido and Cecil went strolling through the woods or down the broad highway. They did not always talk on these excursions. There was time for cogitation. It was to further elaborate one of these cogitations that Guido sought the library on the night of Dobronov's arrival.

It was his first serious effort at a short story. At home he had from time to time covered acres of paper, representing literary exercises rather than a concerted effort. To-night a story, complete, rounded, balanced, presented itself to his mind's eye, and he wrote easily, quickly, almost feverishly, whipped on by a subconscious fear that his pen might not keep pace with his thoughts, that his thoughts, impatient of his pen's slow gait, might race ahead and be lost beyond hope of recapture.

He was in the flush and furore which creative work

imparts. He wrote steadily for three hours, unconscious of time, unconscious of the chill in the room, unconscious of himself. He had almost finished his first story when an apparition at the door challenged his attention. Professor Geddes, clad in a fanciful bathrobe of delft blue and white, regarded the young man sleepily with blinking eyes.

"If you've been sitting over those infernal cards until this hour," said Professor Geddes in a voice husky with sleep, "I've a great mind, sir, to pack you off for home to-morrow."

Guido passed his hand over his brow and sighed deeply. He could not at once adjust himself to the reality of things.

"I've been writing," he stammered, "a short story."

"Oh, that's all right, then," said the Professor, completely mollified. He disappeared through the door to the hall.

Guido, to his surprise, found himself unable to continue. He was like a patient long ill with a fever after the fever is gone. He felt weak, cold, with a curious sensation of unyielding rigidity at the temples and the base of the brain. He jotted down a sequence of memoranda to guide him in the conclusion of his tale on the morrow. It was all he could do. A feebleness, as of old age, he thought, invaded him and seemed to eat into his very marrow. He was about to rise when the door opened again; the Professor entered carrying a tray. He closed the door softly behind him, and said:

"I've made some cocoa and sandwiches. Dobronov's word-pictures of starvation kept me awake and—it's hateful, I know—have given me an unusual appetite. Come, let's eat and drink and talk. I'm glad you have a taste for writing."

"I have the taste all right, but I'm in doubt as to the talent," said Guido, modestly. "You are more than kind to me, sir," he added, and he received the cup of cocoa which the Professor handed him.

"I think," said the Professor, settling himself comfortably in his own particular chair, as for a long talk, "every thinking person has some talent for writing. The great point, in my estimation, is to have the taste for

writing. You are very young to try your hand at the art which is the most complex of all and the most difficult as well, because its medium is not canvas, nor marble, nor bronze, nor harmonics, but the entire gamut of life and humanity."

"You frighten me, sir," said Guido.

"I hope not. It is true, I wish to discourage you a little," the Professor continued, smoothly, "so that you may not be too bitterly disappointed if your first story is rejected. You are too young to know life, too young to have formed a theory of life."

"I think I know life fairly well," Guido replied, with the insouciant assurance of extreme youth. "But, of course, as yet I have no style."

"Never you mind your style," said the Professor, with unwonted energy. "Don't try to achieve a style. If you do, you'll achieve mannerisms instead. Herbert Spencer's comments on style are the most telling and the soundest I remember. He says that he never gave thought to the matter of style, but concentrated all his efforts upon producing as clear and emphatic a presentation of his thoughts as possible."

"You spoke of a theory of life," said Guido. "Did you mean, sir, adherence to the idealistic or the realistic conception of life?"

"And what may you know about idealism and realism?" Professor Geddes demanded.

Guido hesitated a moment before replying.

"You know, sir," he said, "if it's not presumptuous of me to judge, it seems to me that the writers who are realists have set out with the avowed intention of unearthing everything unlovely in human nature. They see the springs of action solely in greed, passion, selfishness, sordidness. When they paint a fine character, like Père Goriot, they make him out to be something of a fool."

"And the idealists?"

"They see motives exclusively as we would like to see them in others and in ourselves, and their characters haven't a selfish thought between them. Excepting the villains, and they are deep-dyed, indeed. But human nature is a blend, is it not?"

"It undoubtedly is," said the Professor. "Do I under-

stand that you intend to steer a middle course between idealism and realism? To combine them, as it were? If you succeed, you would indeed be doing something worth while. I don't believe it's been done excepting by the greatest of the great—Homer, Shakespeare, Meredith."

"I think others have done it as well," said Guido, speaking with sudden eagerness. "I mean the Russians, sir. The Russian novelists. They are giants. At first glance their characters all seem a little mad, but I think that is due to the Russian disinclination to comment much upon their characters, as the better English writers do. I've read a few of Meredith's novels, sir, although I do not pretend to entirely understand them, and Meredith is certainly an essayist as well as a novelist. And so are other English novelists—George Eliot and Bulwer Lytton, and, oh, all of them. The running commentaries which illuminate their characters constitute essays in miniature. Something like this. Something like the way the Japanese call any one line in which a beautiful thought is couched a poem. I don't know whether I make myself clear."

"Quite clear," said Professor Geddes. "Pray, continue."

"The Russians rarely do that. You've got to find out about their characters for yourself. And—at first, as I said before—they seem a little mad. The truth is they are all intensely human. It's only because their inwardness is so clearly externalized that they seem mad. And there is one quality in the Russian novelists which I have found nowhere else—though I confess I get far more enjoyment out of the English writers."

"And what is that one quality?" Professor Geddes inquired, curiously.

"I don't think I can explain it."

"Try."

"Well, they have such faith in humanity, such a love for humanity. They make you feel that a man who does a bad thing is not necessarily bad. He may be weak, or carried away by anger, or passion, or driven into a corner by circumstances. But you feel there is something good somewhere in his heart. All he needs is another chance to bring it out. It's the same kindness in withholding judgment that Dobronov showed to-night when he would

not condemn the woman from whose notions of right and wrong his own differ so fundamentally." Guido paused and then softly pronounced "the woman's" name, "Varvara Alexandrovna."

"Go on," said Professor Geddes, feeling as he were driving a thoroughbred horse somewhat ruthlessly.

"And even the characters who are ridiculous or thoroughly depraved—well, there's a breath of idealism to soften even them. You feel if the circumstances of their lives had been different, they would have turned out differently, because they are human beings, flesh and blood human beings, and therefore they cannot be utterly bad. I think, sir, that's all."

"Well," said Professor Geddes, "I can tell you this much, my boy. Your idealism will take care of itself. You will have to meet evil at first hand, face to face, in order that you may believe it. That is just as well. How is it——" a new thought had apparently struck the Professor, "that, since you applaud the leniency of the Russian writers, and Dobronov's, too, you do not practice it? You have Dobronov's word for it that the lady, Varvara Alexandrovna, did what we consider wrong actuated solely by the highest possible motives."

Guido smiled subtly.

"In the first place," he said, "I'm not a Russian. So I cannot be expected to take the Russian view of things, even if I think it very fine."

"You mean that you take the American view?"

"I hope so," Guido replied a little unsteadily. He was not quite certain to what he was committing himself.

"And what may the American view be?" The question which Guido had feared stared him in the face. He possessed too much self-reliance, however, to turn tail and fly.

"It, first of all, stands for self-restraint and poise and tolerance and good-nature. Also the safe-guarding of the rights of the individual." He was now safely launched and found no difficulty in embroidering this theme. "That means, of course, that the individual must respect the rights of other individuals. And we practice a good deal of idealism in many ways—but Americans are not fond of the word. Perhaps it is because the idealistic trend in America—I think I ought to call it the American habit

of right living and kind thinking—makes it comparatively easy for all to lead the right sort of life, that good motives run amuck do not commend themselves to Americans as they do to Russians.”

“I see,” said the Professor, “that you have thought to some purpose. And now, do you know what time it is? It is half-past two. You had better go to bed.”

“I want to make a few more notes,” Guido begged.

“Oh, very well. I’ll see you’re not called in the morning.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Alone once more, Guido returned to his manuscript. But he had now completely lost the thread of his story. He was wretchedly fagged and tired. The broad, leather-covered couch beckoned invitingly.

“For two minutes only,” he thought, pressing chill fingers to a fever-hot brow. He flung himself upon the couch, drawing the cover up over his feet.

“For two minutes only,” he repeated, and fell sound asleep.

When the Professor entered the library the next morning he found that the lamp had gone out in a smother of smoke. But Guido was still sleeping the sleep of the just.

The Professor tiptoed to the table. The pages of Guido’s story lay spread broadcast over the desk and blotter. Carefully gathering them together, the Professor carried them to the window.

He laid down the manuscript a half-hour later with a startled look in his eyes. He had expected to find the usual strained effervescence of a first effort. Instead he had found a little gem, pitched in the lyric key, and pulsing throughout with a virility of thought and tenderness of sentiment which would have done credit to a veteran *littérateur*.

Oddly enough his thoughts assumed a personal tinge.

“I hope,” he thought, “I hope this boy will love Janet. Yes, I hope it. He is worthy of her.”

Guido stirred. The Professor turned toward the couch and saw fluttering eyelids, stretching arms and hands fumbling blindly in midair.

“What time is it?” Guido demanded, sitting bolt upright. “I believe I’ve slept here all night.”

"I'm sure you have," said the Professor. "It's long past ten o'clock."

"I must change my clothes and have a bath," said Guido, stifling a yawn. "Heavens, how tired I am! Oh, sir, have you read my story?"

"Yes, I've read it."

"And you think it rot? You do. I see it in your face."

"My dear boy, you see nothing of the sort. I do not think it rot. It rather took my breath away. It's really superlatively good. I withdraw my words of last night. By all means, write, and begin at once, and expect to do well. You have genius, my young friend."

Guido grew red and white in quick succession.

"Oh, Professor Geddes," he cried, "oh, sir, you *are* partial to me." And he staggered off to his bath.

The Professor's praise had a curious effect on Guido. He had a fair modicum of both the overweening conceit and the shattering diffidence of youth and the two passions waged continual conflict in his heart. To silence conceit, which was inclined to become obstreperous after the glowing tribute which Professor Geddes had paid him, Guido requisitioned diffidence, a trick by which he hoped to maintain his spiritual balance of power. But he played up his diffidence too strongly and became its prey. His ambition experienced a horrid slump. Mere chance, no doubt, had made him acquit himself "superlatively" well the previous evening. Since he had done well once, he would—odd logic—never put pen to paper again for fear of making a consummate ass of himself the next time. It was doubtful even whether he would be able to complete the miserable little story which he had begun the previous evening.

CHAPTER V

THE newspaper cart from Three Corners passed "Waldheim" at eleven o'clock on Sunday mornings. When Guido descended to the porch a little after eleven, refreshed and invigorated by his bath, he found Dr. Koenig and Grossvater Geddes reading different sections of a German paper; Cecil was immersed in "The Times"; Professor Geddes was browsing over the book reviews of the same journal. Janet and Dobronov sat on the steps of the porch, talking.

Janet, when she saw Guido, sprang to her feet.

"Play tennis?" she asked.

"No thanks, not on an empty stomach."

"Wouldn't Maggie give you something to eat?"

"Oh, yes. But I didn't wish to spoil my appetite for your mother's Sunday dinner. I'm not like Dobronov."

Dobronov smiled good-naturedly.

"Father says you were up all night writing. What did you do that for?" Janet continued.

"I did it for the reason most people do most things. Because I could not help myself."

"I do not think that a very good reason," said Janet. "I call it a lazy reason."

"Why 'lazy?'"

"Because it required no thinking to produce."

"But if it is the real reason?"

"Then it's a weak reason instead of a lazy one."

"Well, I'll agree to let it go at that. It's the true reason. Therefore a weak reason. Weak reasons befit weak persons. And I'm very weak just now—from hunger."

From which it will be seen that Guido had learned to accommodate himself to Janet's half-mischievous, half-whimsical manner of give and take conversation. Dobronov, entirely destitute of humor as he was, looked amazed at this sort of rough and tumble pleasantry.

Mrs. Geddes appeared at the threshold just then, and Janet exclaimed:

"Well, Guido, here's mother come to tell us dinner is ready and to save your life. Mother, is dinner ready?"

"It is. And Guido shall have the first helping of everything because he had no breakfast. Come, my lad."

Guido sprang to Mrs. Geddes' side with exaggerated alacrity, made her a magnificent bow and offered her his arm. Falling in with the boy's humor, she accepted his arm, after dropping him an old-fashioned curtsey. They walked off together laughing and talking. The rest followed more slowly.

Janet's eyes followed Guido's adoringly. This young lady had many curious little ways with her. She had been candor itself in avowing her infatuation for Guido to her father. Later, seized with excoriating qualms of maiden modesty, she had recanted. Now, becoming aware suddenly that the plain truth of the situation—as far as she was concerned—was writ upon every lineament of her adorable little face, she essayed to outface things in her usual gallant-curtle-ax-upon-my-thigh manner. So, when they reached the dining-room, she cried, gayly, mockingly:

"Guido, did you know that the plumes of your hat swept the ground when you bowed to mother?"

Guido laughed. Cecil appeared bored. Dobronov looked bewildered and the Professor was frankly amused.

"You must not take Miss Geddes' words literally, Dobronov," said Guido, and added, thereby augmenting Dobronov's confusion:

"She did not mean a real hat or real plumes, but referred to the shadow plumes of the dream hat about which I was writing last night."

Janet was slightly disconcerted. She could not always put Guido at a disadvantage. But I think she did not very much care, for our young lady was so many fathoms deep in love that she gloried in each and every victory of our hero, even when it was won at her own expense.

"Guido," she asked, presently, a little less fortissimo, "did you really write that sort of a story?"

"What sort of a story?" Guido asked, with a very fair imitation of the Professor's manner when under fire of Janet's inquisitorial guns.

"About plumed hats, and lace ruffles and all the frills and fancies men used to wear in King Charles' day?"

"No," said Guido, quite seriously, "I did not sit up half the night to write a tract on the millinery which the Cavaliers of King Charles' court used to parade. That's more in Eddie Erdman's line."

"I must tell you, sir," Janet blazed out, "that it is very horrid of you to answer me like that. You are laughing at me."

"Am I though?" Guido retorted. "Truly now, I thought I was merely keeping you from laughing at me."

"You've met your match, Janet," Cecil sang out, and Janet gave Cecil a look of superb disdain. Then she said:

"Look here, Guido, you really might be decent and tell what you were writing about."

"Men and women, chiefly."

"That's obvious."

"Why then the question?"

"Is the story humorous? Pathetic? Witty? Adventuresome?"

"Perhaps it's like the players in Hamlet—tragical-comical-historical-pastoral."

"Ah!" Janet's exclamation was replete with disgust.

They bandied words a little longer. Would he let her see the story? What? Not good enough? Absurd. If it wasn't good enough to read, how could he hope to sell it? He didn't intend to sell it? Well, all she could say was that a writer who thought himself above healthy criticism and normal competition was a—a—a—a——

"A what?" Guido inquired. He was intensely amused. But his amusement faded away quite suddenly, for there was a look of blind pain in the girl's eyes that wrung his soul into swift contrition.

"Of course I'll be glad to have you read the story if you really think it worth your time," he said, gallantly.

"It was worth your time, wasn't it?" Janet demanded, sharply. But she was now entirely appeased, as he could see.

"It was well worth his time, Janet," said the Professor, "well worth his time."

Janet and Guido looked at each other. In their eyes was the candid admiration of two opposing knights after a

gallantly fought tilting match. The pain had completely died out of her eyes. Quite a different emotion was mirrored there now. What he saw made Guido catch his breath. His own eyes responded to hers and then, unaccountably, a swift, engulfing shyness of each other and the subject smote them into silence. Nor did Janet ask Guido for the story again nor did he offer it to her. Guido's first-born was not referred to again. He completed it and then suffered it to languish in the dusty gloom of the string-and-nail drawer of the Professor's desk.

"Uncle Ned," said Cecil, "did you see that the papers are renewing the European War specter this morning? They buried it in an inside page among a lot of local news items of no consequence whatever."

"I didn't happen to notice the item you speak of," said Professor Geddes, "but I did see that Germany is trying to lay down the law to us. She has notified us that exclusive American control of the Haitian customs will not be agreeable to the Imperial German government. An American warship, with seven hundred marines on board, has been ordered down to Port au Prince."

"Then," said Cecil decisively, "that may drag you into the European War."

"The European War?" Guido demanded, in surprise. "What are you talking about, Cecil?"

"The General War which is coming," Cecil replied, briefly.

"How do you know that a war is coming?"

"Oh, everybody in Europe knows it is coming," Cecil replied. "I remember as a little chap of ten hearing my father and uncle argue about it by the hour."

"I also heard it discussed when I was abroad," Professor Geddes remarked, thoughtfully.

"But why should there be a war at this time?" Guido inquired.

"Because of the Serajevo murder," said Cecil. "Any old thing is good enough to serve as a pretext, you know."

"I don't understand at all," said Guido. "Nations don't go to war now-a-days, do they, unless they have a good reason?"

"You mustn't judge European affairs and the European

way of doing things by the American viewpoint," said Cecil, evasively.

"Yes—but you speak of a pretext, and everybody knowing that a war is coming, and—what does it all mean?"

"Well, because, I beg your pardon, sir!" The apology was anticipatory and was addressed to Grossvater Geddes and to Dr. Koenig. "We in England think that Germany has got it in for us—at least that's what some people in England think."

"But why should Germany wish to harm England?" Grossvater Geddes asked, genuinely surprised. "Germany has become so rich and strong in the last two decades."

"Sometimes a man who becomes rich and strong overnight develops an insatiable greed and a hatred of everyone who stands in his way," Cecil said, a little reluctantly. It was plain that he feared to give offense to the old Germanophile. "Germany would have gone to war at the time of the Morocco incident, I have heard my English cousins say, if there had not been so much money owing Germany from England. Germany was loth to forfeit that money, and she backed down. But now the situation is reversed. Germany owes England money, not England Germany."

"What a lot Cecil knows about European affairs," Guido thought a little enviously.

"But that was a long time ago," said Grossvater Geddes amiably, "and there has been no quarrel since."

Cecil did not reply, and Professor Geddes said:

"Speak up, Cecil. This is Liberty Hall. Each man has a right to his own opinion."

"Well, Uncle Ned, it's this way. You know England has offered time and again not to increase her fleet if Germany will only promise to do the same. Germany invariably declines to bind herself by a promise."

"Why should she?" Grossvater Geddes remarked. "The German fleet is still much smaller than the English?"

"Nor need it be as large," Cecil rejoined. "The British Empire is distributed over the face of the earth. The high seas are the arteries of commerce, our merchantmen are the blood that gives them life, and our fleet protects that life."

"Germany has colonies, too."

"Not to compare with England's, sir! Not at the present time. What her intentions may be in the future no honest man cares to think about. Why, sir, it's like this. The German army is much finer and larger and better than the English. Germany needs an army, she says. Does it worry us? Not tuppence, sir. Why should it? It's none of our business. It's none of our business any more than the superiority of our fleet is Germany's. But Germany, sir, would have cause for concern and the right to ask questions if we in England suddenly aimed to build up an army as big and as fine as the German, or bigger and finer. And you must not forget, sir, that the German Emperor, upon one historic occasion said that Germany's future lies upon the water. What does that mean, sir?"

"Then England hates Germany?"

"By no means. We admire many of her institutions. We are willing, nay, eager to be friends. If we hated Germany, sir, would we have ceded the northern Gibraltar, Heligoland, I mean, to her little over a decade ago in return for an African island of commercial importance but of strategic insignificance?"

"But what good would Heligoland have done England?" Grossvater Geddes fenced. "Any attempt on Britain's part to fortify it would have aroused Germany's instant hostility."

"Of course. But British ownership would have precluded German fortifications; would have given us, you know, a sort of geographical hostage for Germany's good behavior."

"I think you British are imagining things," said Grossvater Geddes, placidly. "My dear," this to his daughter-in-law, "how delicious this chicken is."

Dobronov sat staring at his plate, heaped high with chicken, creamed potatoes, rich brown gravy, spinach and apple jelly in something like consternation. Mrs. Geddes who had been aware of his quandary for some time, said in the most matter-of-fact tone:

"Mr. Dobronov—I am so sorry—it was quite impossible at dinner-time to prepare you a special dish of cereal—we'll be glad to do so to-night, if you really object to our way of living, although I assure you, since we keep chickens and have a vegetable garden, this dinner costs us next to nothing. Cereals, of course, we must buy."

Dobronov colored furiously. It was the first time Guido had seen him show signs of being a social human being and not merely an embodied human soul. It amused Guido vastly to see how the breeding of the man of birth triumphed over the snobbery of the religious fanatic.

"I beg of you not to inconvenience yourself, Mrs. Geddes," Dobronov said. "I shall enjoy this dinner enormously, I know, and future dinners and suppers as well."

Guido, regarding Mrs. Geddes, reflected that much as he had admired that lady's social tact and manner in the past, he had woefully underrated her psychological resources.

The papers the next morning contained the astonishing news that Austria was ready to invade Serbia.

"But don't they serve notice on each other in Europe before they go to war?" Guido inquired.

Cecil and Professor Geddes laughed.

"Oh, of course, they declare war formally some time or other," Cecil replied, "but not necessarily before striking the first blow."

"But——" said Guido, and relapsed into silence. He was unable to formulate his objection. It was diffuse, general, unspecific, and it was directed against the crowning idiocy of the European scheme of things.

By the following Saturday the papers had emerged so far from their lethargy of indifference as to play up big the news that a general European war seemed imminent, although the papers still expressed the hope that the Czar would avert the disaster by keeping out of the mix-up between Austria and Serbia.

On Sunday there was no delivery of mail, and the newspaper cart was not due before eleven. When the house assembled for nine-o'clock breakfast consisting of inch-deep omelette soufflé with home-made jam, and biscuits with sweet butter, and flap-jacks with maple syrup and cracked wheat with double cream, Cecil was missing. Maggie, on being interrogated, explained that Master Cecil had taken the car and gone down to the village to meet the newspaper train.

"On an empty stomach?" inquired the Professor.

"Oh, no, sir!" Maggie was quite offended. "Of course

I made him some coffee and toast, and I fried him a rasher of bacon and some potatoes."

"He'll be ready for more breakfast when he gets back," said Mrs. Geddes.

"Yes, mum," said Maggie. "It's what meself has been thinking. I've kept him some biscuit dough, mum, and I'll have some hot flapjacks for him, too."

Cecil came in just as the family was beginning on the third pan of biscuits and the fourth glass of apple-jelly. He waved the "Times" tragically.

"It's come, Uncle Ned," he said, "the War has arrived."

"Not——" Professor Geddes ejaculated. He laid down the morsel of biscuit and jelly which had been in transit from plate to mouth and looked concerned—or tried to. The charge of gluttony could not be laid to his door, but he shared the amiable failing inhering in most gentlemen of sedentary pursuits—he thoroughly enjoyed the pleasures of the table. So that it was not an entirely easy matter in the midst of Sunday morning's gustatory exercises, with gastronomic pleasure before and after, to look terribly upset and startled, particularly as, to the American mind, the prospect of a general war did not seem in the least plausible.

"Yes, sir," said Cecil, "Austria's gone and done it. She's broken off diplomatic relations with Serbia."

"Ah, if that is all!" Professor Geddes salvaged the neglected morsel of biscuit from his plate and conveyed it to his mouth with a semi-guilty air.

"Of course," Cecil continued, seating himself and helping himself to three biscuits, "of course, Austria meant to do this from the start. That forty-eight-hour ultimatum to Serbia made Austria's intentions clear, I should think."

"What I cannot understand," said Guido, "is why all this should happen now. The Serbian crime happened at least three weeks ago, didn't it?"

"On June 28th," said Cecil, briefly, again exciting Guido's admiration and envy by his precise knowledge.

"Then, why didn't Austria act at once?" Guido demanded.

"That's just it, of course!" Cecil exclaimed, excitedly, in his preoccupation talking with a full mouth. "She's been hatching mischief betwixt times."

"Wouldn't it be more charitable to suppose that she's been

investigating matters in the meantime," Grossvater Geddes suggested, blandly, and Dr. Koenig grunted assent in this view.

"But," said Guido, beginning with his favorite connective of protest, "but—if it took Austria a full month to investigate matters, and to think them over, why didn't she give Serbia more time than one-fifteenth of a month to do her investigating and thinking over."

"Well," said Professor Geddes, "let's forget about Europe for a while and thank Heaven we are in America, where the murder of one or two or a dozen persons, no matter how high they stand in the public esteem, cannot plunge a nation into war."

After that Europe very quickly became incomprehensible and unintelligible to American ideas. Everybody seemed to be threatening everybody else with war, and everybody's business had become everybody else's. Germany threatened Russia and Russia threatened Germany. Austria invaded Serbian territory; London continued to work strenuously for peace. It was an imbroglio utterly beyond the comprehension of the normal American mind, uninitiated in and uncontaminated by European political aspirations, conventions and suspicions. Finally, by end of the week, the situation had become so far clarified that one circumstance stood out boldly. **THE PEACE OF EUROPE WAS IN THE KAISER'S HANDS!**

Guido's heart pulsed more quickly, and, truth to tell, pulsed more proudly. From a boy he had, as we know, entertained a profound admiration for the Kaiser. This Hohenzollern, he thought, was different from those early predecessors, the Grand Elector, Frederick the Great, Frederick's brutish and brutal father, even William the First, who had declined into a mere tool in the able but evil hands of Bismarck. This Hohenzollern, Guido thought, was much like his father, that noble scion of an evil stock who, had he lived, would have introduced parliamentary reforms in Germany and made Germans a politically free people with the privileges and responsibilities of freemen.

Guido was proud—quite inordinately, ridiculously proud of his Kaiser for just two days. Then, on August 1st, came the final thunderclap:

"A fateful hour has fallen. Envious peoples everywhere

are compelling us to our just defense. The sword is forced into our hands——”

So said William, so soon to brand himself as “The Damned” by his ruthlessness, his hypocrisy, his general policy of sustained and deliberate cruelty.

Thus read the astonished boy—thus read an astonished world. Cecil grunted comprehendingly.

“I say, Guy,” he said, “don’t ask me any questions at the table now, will you? I don’t want to hurt Grossvater Geddes’ feelings, but that Kaiser, you know, he’s a rotter.”

Cecil then thrust his hands into his pockets and whistling merrily went off for one of his long hikes without asking Guido to come with him.

That was well. For Guido was angry, very, very angry and indignant with his beloved Cecil. Hero-worship is as indispensable to the adolescent mind as walking is to the growing body. Guido had been unfortunate in his choice of a living hero—for defunct heroes must be supplemented by those who still draw breath—that was all.

But, although angry, Guido was not nearly as angry as he was trying to make himself believe—at least not with Cecil.

For there had come over him during the last days a great and salient change. He had been assailed by grave doubts. Discrepancies, overlooked in the first flush of amazement which enwrapped a world that had suddenly committed itself to insanity, had grilled and harrowed him. Slowly, gradually, there was beginning to dawn upon him the truth. William, whom he would fain have absolved, was unabsolvable—whether he was the chief instigator of this Crime of Crimes—as Cecil seemed to think—or, like the grandfather whose name he bore, merely the catspaw of men far more clever, more ambitious and more unscrupulous than himself.

The anger and indignation directed against Cecil, therefore, was the last feeble barricade behind which his ancient faith was entrenching itself. But the crumbling process had begun. Guido would make a few more defensive statements, half-believing them, half-expecting them to be controverted, and avid all the while for valid information that would shed light on the motives, the origin, the inception of the Ghoulish Crime. Then, quite suddenly, it was writ-

ten that his faith in William should be splintered into mere slivers and he should be harrowed by the wormwood anguish which befalls those who have given faith—the holiest and most generous gift which lies within the jurisdiction of the human heart—where faith is not due.

Guido was still fuming and spluttering about the veranda in his futile efforts to underprop and save his decaying faith when Dr. Koenig appeared with a face like a thundercloud.

"I'm going home on the early afternoon train," he said. "I don't want to quarrel with my old friend again. I almost quarrelled with him just now. And don't ask fool questions at dinner."

"And do you, too, blame the Kaiser?" Guido inquired.

"Blame him? Good Lord. I admit I was taken in by his superb pose for a few days. Bah! Why doesn't all Europe follow our example? A bad lot. Curse 'em all. May their heads topple off with their crowns!"

Still Guido clung to the last vestige of his tottering faith.

"Didn't the Kaiser try to maintain peace?" he asked, feebly.

This was the last straw for Dr. Koenig. He began tramping wildly up and down the veranda, roaring out disjointed sentences as he tramped.

"The Kaiser tried to maintain peace, did he?" he shouted. "Tried! Hear him, ye powers that reign above, hear him! Oh, oracular Synthesis! Is this then the goal? Ha, only the Great Potter, if Potter there be and not merely Pot, may experiment in human clay. Pan pipes, Bias reigns supreme and Error stalks the earth. Troy was sacked for lesser sacrilege than this."

Guido had never seen the old physician in such a state of wild abandon. He could not guess what had excited him so terribly. The lad knew his Greek mythology very well, but he had never heard of a god—or goddess—by the name of Bias nor of an oracle called Synthesis. He was seized with a horrid fear that Dr. Koenig had gone suddenly insane. He said, soothingly:

"I dare say he didn't try hard enough."

This concession, far from calming Dr. Koenig, seemed to vex him still more. He made as if to speak, then shut his

mouth with a snap, and finally, after vociferating a furious "Bah!" strode into the house.

A few minutes later Dobronov appeared, grip in hand.

"I thought you had accepted Mrs. Geddes' invitation to stay another week?" Guido questioned him in surprise.

"So I did," Dobronov replied. There was a wild look in his eyes and his face was haggard, "but the War, of course, was not to be foreseen. Important business takes me back to New York."

"Sergius Ivanovich," said Guido, "you are a European and you must understand European affairs better than I do. Tell me, explain to me, what is it all about? Surely, all the great powers, England, France, Russia, Austria, Germany aren't going to war because one poor crazed fool threw a bomb and killed an archduke and his morganatic wife!"

Guido spoke with desperate intensity. He spoke to give vent to his indignant bewilderment rather than because he hoped to elicit any illuminating information from Dobronov, who, he believed, had strayed too far from the beaten tracks of human action and thought to take a conventional view of any purely worldly matter.

"I will tell you what is at the bottom of the whole thing," Dobronov replied. "I can explain the entire situation to you in a monosyllable. Fear! Everybody in Europe is afraid of everybody else and that is the truth. Russia is afraid that Austria will subjugate and annex Serbia. She is afraid also that Germany will help Austria and become the dominant factor in Europe. Germany suffers from chronic Russophobia, which of course is intensified a hundredfold at the moment. And Germany is always in mortal terror of England. France she fears as a matter of habit and France fears Germany because Germany is her historical foe. Now it is a psychological truism that when a man is badly frightened he will keep quiet for a certain length of time only. If his fear is prolonged beyond a given point of time, his nervous tension becomes so great that, automatically, it translates itself into action. There, in a nutshell, you have the European situation, for what is true of fear in the individual is also true of national fear, and, when fear is held in common by a large number of human units, it assumes

proportions and acquires a momentum which the fear of one individual can of course never achieve."

Guido stared in astonishment at Dobronov. At last Sergius Ivanovich had said something eminently sensible.

Dobronov continued:

"I do not wish you to believe," he said, "that I have arrived at this solution of the European problem unaided. I have been prepared to understand these events during the past six months. I might as well tell you—I have all but decided to embrace Christian Science."

"What?" Guido exclaimed. "The last time I saw you you were going to join the Unitarian or the Universalist Church—I forget which."

"Either or both," the amazing Dobronov replied. "I've changed my mind since. Neither faith satisfies me. Both cramp the spirit. The Universalists build their schedule of belief about a commonplace, a self-evident phase of Christianity. I don't believe there is anywheres to-day an intelligent Christian who believes in perpetual damnation. Then why use the obvious as a nucleus for a faith? The Unitarians go to the other extreme. They affirm something which cannot be affirmed any more than its reverse can be affirmed. Who so presumptuous as to decide whether or not Jesus was divine? Say he wasn't, using the word in the usual sense. Still, human perfection carried to *his* point spells divinity. It is undignified to cavil about this point. It is worse than that—it is irreverent."

"In time," said Guido, "you will discover something to make you disavow your faith in Christian Science."

"Never! They are unequivocally right in their belief that God is Truth, that nothing exists but Truth, that sickness and sin and sorrow are carnal thought objectified—evil imaginings as they were. They are absolutely right in proscribing fear—it is at the bottom of all earthly ills. Their teachings have made me understand the reason why I like and respect Dmitri Stepanovich, although I disagree entirely with his teachings and with his activity. But both he and his cousin, Varvara Alexandrovna, do not know the meaning of fear. And that brings me to the matter which forces me to leave so abruptly. Can I trust you?"

Guido assured him that he could, realizing, with a sink-

ing of the heart that Dobronov was about to forsake the high road of sanity for one of those devious blind alleys into which, sooner or later, he seemed always to stray.

Dobronov invited Guido to follow him to the hat and coat room, probably because it was the only room on the lower floor which boasted of doors. Having closed these, he seated himself on a settee and motioned to Guido to do likewise. Guido had a fascinated sense of being engaged in some dark conspiracy.

Having taken these precautions to obtain privacy, Dobronov told his story in a hushed voice.

"You know," he said, "that I am a believer in the Doctrine of Non-Resistance. Dmitri Stepanovich, while a man of peace and a detestor of war, believes that force, at times, is justifiable. All this you of course comprehend. What follows? As a Non-Resister, self-evidently, I believe that all men should do as they please. I do not believe in punishment or in imprisonment. If Vasalov's conscience tells him he must resist evil, that is no reason why I should change my mind and say that Evil should resist him for resisting itself by imprisoning or exiling him. Do you follow me?"

"Yes," said Guido. He thought: "Poor old Dob has gone stark raving mad. If the War does this to us, who are safe on this side of the Atlantic, what spiritual and mental havoc must it bring to the poor humans in Europe!"

Dobronov continued:

"Now, since Evil does not really exist, Vasalov, in throwing his bombs, really does nothing wrong. Apparently, however, he does. It is plain, moreover, that of the War really comes off, a terrible amount of wrong thinking will be objectified and cross the wires of truth and obscure divine mind. Do you follow me?"

"I do," said Guido, weakly.

"Well, then, if Vasalov, by throwing half a dozen of his death-dealing bombs, which, in truth, do not exist at all, can prevent all this mass of carnal thought from being unloaded upon the world, is it right that he should go ahead and do it, or should he not? Because I who am a Non-Resister, happen to have thought the matter out, is it for me to keep the light from poor Vasalov who, since he believes that he does right in throwing bombs, does

no wrong, and wouldn't do wrong even if the bombs were actual things, which, of course, they are not, being mere figments of carnal imagination? In brief, if a small dosage of evil belief can prevent an enormous flood of carnal mind from engulfing the world, who am I to stay the hand—Vasalov's hand—which can guide the evil which is to act medicinally upon the world?"

Guido sat back and stared. Just stared.

Dobronov, with a look toward door and windows, continued:

"I will be brief. Vasalov's organization has branches everywhere. Now, Russia, England and France are Allies. If Russia fights, defensively, England and France will fight, being bound by treaty to do so. What are they fighting about? Ostensibly because a Serbian lunatic murdered an Austrian fool. Now—if only I can get Vasalov to see my point—if he arranges to have an Englishman blow off the head of the French President, to have a Frenchman blow off the head of the Russian Czar, to have a Russian do the same for King George, leaving the Kaiser to be dispatched by an Austrian—don't you see what is bound to happen? Russia, England and France would have to fight each other, and so would Austria and Germany. But, as the powers on both sides are bound by treaty to help each other against a common foe, you will perceive what a hopeless situation would arise. Armageddon would checkmate itself and come to nought. Well, what do you think of my plan?"

"I think," said Guido, faintly, "you had better see Vasalov about it." Arguments, as he knew, were of no avail when Dobronov was in the grip of a new, self-evolved idea. The idea, like a sickness, must run its course.

Dinner was a gloomy affair that day. Dobronov and Dr. Koenig ate their meal hurriedly, the Professor, who had promised to drive them down to Three Corners himself, assuring them repeatedly that there was not the least necessity for haste. Dobronov had so far succumbed to the usages of polite society, that sooner than put his hostess to the inconvenience of having an early dinner prepared for him, he had consented to travel by car down the mountain which he had laboriously ascended on foot a week earlier.

Dr. Koenig refused to shake hands with Guido. He fairly bristled when the boy approached him.

"I am disappointed in you," he said, coldly.

Grossvater Geddes made an unfortunate remark.

"By and by you will see, Koenig," he said, "that Germany is not so much to blame as you now think. I have been looking over the papers of the last week and the Kaiser expressly says that the sword was forced upon him, that the war, as far as Germany is concerned, is a purely defensive war."

Dr. Koenig already had one foot on the step of the automobile. He withdrew it. He faced Grossvater Geddes and tried to speak, but succeeded in producing no sound. His face was terrible to behold. Livid at first, it suddenly turned purple, and his eyes bulged angrily from his head. Finally he regained his power of speech.

"I'm ashamed of you, Geddes," he cried. "You, you, of all men! To quote a Hohenzollern. To quote this Kaiser with the blighted arm and the withered heart as if he were worth quoting!" Like an avalanche the old physician's angry oration rolled on. Had Grossvater Geddes forgotten the Year Forty-eight? Had he forgotten his lovely young sister who died from the effects of her dreadful midwinter flight from Berlin? Had he forgotten how this wretch's grandfather had robbed him and his—under the polite term of confiscation—of all his personal effects, of all the wonderful old plate and jewelry and porcelains and paintings and laces which had been the treasured heirlooms of centuries? And he pointed with scorn unutterable to the pride which his old friend took in his room and in what it contained. What did those possessions amount to? They were merest shard, saved for him by friends who had secretly removed these much-prized relics from his mansion after the King had thrust the Geddes family into the street, but before the royal robber could send his hirelings to gather in his plunder.

"Have you forgotten all this?" the old physician cried. "I have not. Ah, I never thought to see any *Achtundvierziger* play the turn-coat and admire and believe in one of that accursed litter, that breed of leeches and parasites, and branded, all of them in some way, like Cain, like

mavericks, and reigning not by right divine—God! the impious impudence of that—but by abetment of the Devil!”

The old man’s denunciatory powers, of which he had given such a pyrotechnical display, left his listeners mute and shaken. Dr. Koenig himself, now his passion had spent itself, looked crumpled and old.

“I am not a vindictive man,” Grossvater Geddes replied, in his mild, meek way. “Far be it from me to hate or mistrust this man because his forebear persecuted me.”

“It’s in the blood, it’s in the blood,” Dr. Koenig cried. “They’re a venomous brood. The Hohenzollern record for plunder, pillage, and robbery is quite without parallel.”

“Germany has flourished very nicely under the three last representatives of this line of plunderers, pillagers and robbers,” Grossvater Geddes resorted, smiling slyly.

“Good Lord!” Dr. Koenig exclaimed. “Ah, you are hopeless, Geddes, you are hopeless.”

Mrs. Geddes and the Professor exchanged a quick look. The Professor, watch in hand, was becoming restive.

“Grossvater,” said Mrs. Geddes, laying her hand on the old man’s sleeve, “if you persist in quarreling with our guest, you will make him miss his train.”

“God forbid,” said Grossvater Geddes. “Good-bye, Koenig. When we meet again, may we be of one mind.”

Dr. Koenig grunted an unintelligible something and got into the car where Dobronov was already ensconced. All the paraphernalia of Vasalov’s magic lantern was stowed at their feet. The Professor climbed in and started the car. Everybody cried, “Good-bye,” and the Kaiser-hater and the Non-Resister of Evil were gone to no uneventful afternoon, thought those who remained behind.

Janet said, wickedly:

“Mother, do you think Sergius Ivanovich will be a Non-Resister after four hours of Dr. Koenig? If so, his powers of Non-Resistance must be very great.”

Mrs. Geddes frowned at Janet for thus slightly alluding to a departing guest, but the corners of her mouth quivered.

As they walked back to the house, Janet slipped her arm through Guido’s.

“Guido,” she said, “why is Dr. Koenig so down on you?”

"Because I would not say that I think the Kaiser the worst criminal on earth."

"I think," said Janet, "you rather like the Kaiser."

"I have liked him until now," said Guido, a little unsteadily. "I admit, my faith in him is considerably shaken. While, of course, I do not approve of the institution of monarchy, I've always thought William the Second a very fine, manly fellow. There's something about him that strikes the imagination. He makes one think of those heroic figures of the Renaissance—men who combined an enormous self-esteem with an enormous sense of personal responsibility—men who made history, founded dynasties and welded together empires."

Janet looked at him shyly with adoring eyes.

"He may not be as bad as everybody now thinks him," said Guido. "He may merely be backing up Austria to frighten Russia and France into keeping out of the fray."

But his words did not ring true, and for once Janet did not tease him. There was a look of pain in his face which silenced the mischievous words which had risen to her lips.

On returning from the village, Professor Geddes brought with him the latest New York papers, which contained the startling news that the New York Stock Exchange had closed.

"Goodness," said Janet, "how then can we go on? I thought the New York Stock Exchange ran the United States!"

"It does—according to the yellow journals," her father replied, dryly.

"Does it signify anything serious?" Cecil demanded. "Is there going to be a panic?"

"No, the Stock Exchange closed to avert a panic. It closed to prevent worthless European stocks from depreciating our market. It's an eminently sane, safe and conservative measure."

Grossvater Geddes had clipped an editorial from the "Times" and, with the querulous firmness of old age, insisted upon Guido's reading it aloud for the edification of the entire family. Even Maggie was summoned from the kitchen to make part of the audience. The editorial, Grossvater Geddes said, was educational.

After giving the rules of modern warfare, the writer said:

"All these rules were ruthlessly violated in the conduct of the Balkan wars. The Balkan States are not fully civilized. War provokes savagery, but a war involving the Great Powers would be fought with due restraint."

Grossvater Geddes seemed to derive the utmost satisfaction from hearing Guido read this editorial aloud. He looked from face to face, smiling contentedly. The joy of old age in critical discovery is as great as the joy of youth in creation.

"You see," he said, reassuringly, "even if there is a general war, it will be fought decently, in an honest, above-board, sane way."

The past week had been an amazing week, but the week that followed outshone and outdistanced it. That, which in the face of all signs and portents had still seemed incredible, happened. Germany declared war on Russia; Russia reciprocated the compliment; Germany declared war on France, and France on Germany; Austria on Russia, Russia on Austria; even England, which through the person of Sir Edward Grey had worked so sedulously, for peace, after Belgium's pitiful appeal for help, and since her honor was involved, was dragged into the whirlpool. Armageddon had come. The thing was unbelievable and impossible, but the unbelievable and the impossible had happened. All Europe was at war and no one, at least no one in America, could understand what the entire pother was about.

Janet, scanning the list of declarations of war, gave a giggle reminiscent of school-girl days.

"Looks like a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, doesn't it?" she asked. "Pirates of Penzance or the Mikado, I don't remember which."

"Really, Janet, I fail to discover any cause for merriment," said her father.

Father and daughter and Guido were sitting on the porch at the time. One of the instantaneous changes came over Janet which so baffled Guido. She was now quite serious. Guido had never seen such lightning transformations in anyone else, and yet each mood was genuine and natural and sincere.

"This war is going to be the biggest war that ever happened," said Professor Geddes. "To use a slang phrase, it is going to make all other wars look sick. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of men are bound to be killed, and not only men, but women and children will lose their lives."

"Why women and children, Daddy?" Janet inquired, who was now all tenderness and compassion. "You know—that clipping of Grossvater's!"

"Let us hope the writer of that editorial drew a reliable forecast. Guido!"

"Sir."

"I will not require your services this afternoon. I have work to do in the library."

"Thank you, sir."

"I admire Daddy's way of inviting people out of his library even more than his manner of asking them in," said Janet, when they were alone. "Don't look at me in that tone of voice, Mr. Morality. Oh, I see. I laughed in the wrong place. Have I fallen out of your good graces?"

Guido flushed.

"You know that I think the world and all of you, Janet," he said, with quiet enthusiasm. "You didn't realize when you laughed what you were laughing at."

"Think so?"

"I mean, to borrow one of Dobronov's Christian Science expressions, you didn't objectify your thought. If you had, you wouldn't have laughed."

"I love to hear you exonerate me, Guido," said Janet, smiling softly at him. "It's dear of you. But I think I do understand the meaning of war. Oh, Guido!"—she was all womanly sweetness and gentleness now, "I am sick at heart when I think of what this may mean. I don't want to realize it. I don't, indeed. Come, let us forget all about it for a while." Her mood veered again. "After all, Europe is no concern of ours. Sensible Europeans come to America. Let's go to the orchard and eat worms and read poetry. I'd like you to read to me aloud. Will you? Do you know that you read very well? Yes, Mr. Modesty, you do. Let's have something that's real poetry. No, not Tennyson. Nothing European. Some-

thing strictly American, something big and strong and kind, like Hiawatha or Evangeline or the Vision of Sir Launfal.

"I want to forget all about Europe," she rattled on. "You've never been abroad, Guido dear, so you don't know. They are all alike. Yes, they are. Think Americans a sort of joke. The English, too. Watch Cecil. He a perfect dear, of course, but he does think his own race is just a wee bit better than other races. Never mind, we'll forgive old England, she's acting so decently in coming to Belgium's aid. Guido, you don't still care for the Kaiser, do you?"

Guido shook his head.


"No," he said. "The idol has toppled from its pedestal and is broken to bits. Oh, Janet, how I admired that man!"

For a moment both sat in silence, Guido engrossed in his thoughts, Janet engrossed in Guido. Presently her soft little hand crept silently into his.

"Come, Guido, dear," she said. "Let's go read poetry. What's Hecuba to us, or we to Hecuba that we should weep for her? The orchard and Longfellow for you and me."

It was of course impossible for anyone possessed of intelligence and emotions to maintain this fine Hecuba aloofness in the face of the events that followed hard and fast. The arrival of the morning newspapers became the event of the day. Mere letters now must wait until at least the headlines of the first page had been scanned and commented upon. Cecil or Guido drove to the village every afternoon to secure the latest evening editions and they brought home a variegated posy of papers, yellow, gray and white, not only for "Waldheim," but for every other cottage in the Mountaintop Colony.

Guido suffered all the disgust and indignation which attend upon misplaced devotion and outraged respect. The breathless speed with which city after city in Belgium fell into the hands of the Germans bewildered and staggered him. Brussels, Namur, Louvain, Longwy, Liège—in less than a week this string of historical old cities had changed ownership. The Germans! The expression assumed a new significance. It had been Guido's habit to class himself as a German; he had felt that he was an American



by courtesy only. Now every drop of blood in his body rose in hot revolt against such a designation. German? Not he. He harked back to the day when his mother in an impassioned plea had besought him never to forget that he was American-born. German! He felt a gratitude which exceeded words that that badge could not be fastened upon him.

The badge of German nationality.

But how about the badge of German blood?

Some tenacious, kindly instinct of race, of which he was wholly oblivious, whispered to him that he must commit the egregious folly of attempting to repudiate his German blood. It behooved him, and others like him, through passionate condemnation of the modern German heresy, to demonstrate to the world at large that the ancient German tradition of unassuming decency and spontaneous, warm-hearted kindness was not entirely defunct, was not irretrievably obsolete; that living veins, bounding living blood, still responded to the rhythm of its beat.

He felt no misgivings, no doubt that German-Americans all over the country shared his feelings. And upon these kindred spirits, upon all who loved the ancient German spirit, because they loved the ancient German spirit, there must some day devolve the task of helping to rehabilitate the fallen German race.

For of the fact that the German race was fallen, was fallen to quite an incredible degree, there should no longer be any doubt.

Horrible tales began to percolate through the columns of the papers. These, at first, no one would believe because no one wanted to believe them. Things so unspeakable, so hideous and shameful were related that Americans shook their heads dubiously and spoke of the exaggerations of hysteria and the psychology of war-fright and the odd phenomenon of the war-lie. Americans knew Germans far too well to give credence to such wild tales. Why, the German contingent in America ranked as high or higher than any other alien contingent as regards thrift, sobriety, truthfulness, cleanliness and honesty. Those were fine virtues, and a race in whom they were ingrained would hardly indulge in such loathsome excesses as the news-



papers, in their mistaken zeal to print dime detective story thrillers of real life, were foisting upon the public.

~ Then, Germany had never been our enemy. England had been our hereditary foe. True, almost a hundred years had elapsed since our last quarrel with her. Still, there had been that quarrel, and the other, greater quarrel which had antedated it. It was surprising how many Americans, *real* Americans, to use Guido's school-boy phrase, gave the preference to Germany and the Germans over England and the English.

True, there was the undeniable, uncircumventable fact of Belgium.

Belgium loomed big, bigger than Germany or England, bigger than Austria or even amorphous Russia; she loomed big because she opposed heroism to bullyism, because, small and defenseless, she had kept faith while Germany, bursting with wealth and man-power, had broken faith.

Belgium had been a stumbling block in Germany's way and she was being tortured and traduced in chastisement. Belgium's plight, her courage, her fine sense of honor appealed to the American imagination, to the American love of spiritual values and most of all to the American habit of heart.

The nation which more than any other had, as a matter of daily routine, given unstintingly to victims of earthquake and tidal wave and volcanic eruption, to sufferers from famine and to those smitten with disease, to whosoever was in sorrow the world over; that nation was predestined to play the Lady Bountiful to Belgium, to sustain and support her, to bind up her wounds, to dress and feed and console her as far as it was possible to assuage such suffering as hers.

Disemboweled Belgium! A Frenchman with the French genius in the creation of a phrase, thus painted Belgium's unnumbered miseries in one vivid word. Disemboweled Belgium! The phrase stuck in Guido's memory as if glued there. He shuddered when he remembered it, which was often.

There was not only Belgium, there was France as well, not to speak of the smaller nations of Eastern Europe which was being thwacked and thumped and beaten into bloody pulp by the mailed fist.

And whereas violated Belgium, which had been a mere name to most Americans before the War, kindled in us the flame of compassionate indignation, invaded France, which was so much more than a mere name, roused in us a burning frenzy of resentment. If lack of generosity there was in blaming all England of a by-gone age for the signal stupidity of a pig-headed king, there was excess of generosity in lavishing upon all France of the same period a wealth of gratitude for the doings of one gallant, great-souled and big-hearted French gentleman, belonging to that class of French society which another, entirely different class of French society had done its best to exterminate a few years later.

At any rate, France clinched the case against Germany. So much evil of Germany was now known to be true that it gradually became to be believed that the worst charges might be true also—charges which at first seemed too exaggeratedly lurid to have any foundation in fact. The statesman who called a treaty with another power a “scrap of paper” might be trusted to instigate heaven-only-knows-what outrages. And all this in spite of the editorial from the “Times” which Grossvater Geddes carried about with him, and read at least thrice a day.

We of America—thank God for it!—think first with our hearts and then with our heads. Germany, replete, with sophistry of such skilled workmanship that, miserable fraud and counterfeit though it was, it might have passed muster elsewhere as honest coin of argument, would never be able to unload that sophistry upon America because of that queer little American trick. It would have been well for Germany if she, too, had owned that same little trick, or, not possessing it, had allowed her heart some little freedom of speech in the councils of the head.

And so, overnight, the sympathy of America aligned itself. A relief expedition for Belgium was promptly fitted out. Belgium was starving, Belgium was suffering. Belgium must be succored! No one had ever knocked in vain against the portals of our compassion and Belgium was to receive royal largess at the hands of the mightiest democracy on earth.

Sympathy having bestowed itself, America settled down once more to the treadmill of normal life. The newspapers,

like a four-day old rose, had lost the first freshness of their bloom. The headlines which had terrified at first now revolted rather than startled. Herod outheroed, William outwillamed; the unusual had become usual, and but for the stark, fiendish, detestable, driveling barbarity of the whole thing, America would have been bored. As it was she was disgusted. The offenses which had by this time become common talk were so unheard of, so very, very abominable that they made you want to close your nostrils as well as your ears. And because America was healthy-minded, she tried not to think overmuch about the whole shocking business. She valiantly plunged her hand in her pockets for coin and more coin and still more coin whenever she was told that coin was needed; and let it go at that.

Germany, meanwhile, still maintaining her pose of idealism incarnate, had perceived that the sympathy which the nation of money-grubbers was bestowing elsewhere was worth something in Pfennigs and Marks. She perceived also that ultimately that sympathy might have a strategic as well as a commercial value. So, to corral what American sentiment might still be available, she played up extraordinary tales of woe concerning the atrocities committed by the bad wicked Belgians upon innocent, unsuspecting German soldiers, who were merely doing their duty for the Fatherland—and for humanity, too, by furthering German Kultur. Hair-curdling tales also they told of the work done by Russian soldiers in East Prussia, tales which excited considerable sympathy for of darkest Russia all tales might gain credence, the average American, like the average German-American confounding Russian with Cossack and Cossack with Russian, thinking them ethnographic and moral equivalents. A grievous mistake this, for the Russian peasant is described by those who know him as the most long-suffering and good-natured human imaginable.

On the last day of August there returned to the little colony at Mountaintop a lady whose cottage had been closed all season, as she had gone abroad in May. She brought with her one child. She had had three children when she started for Europe. She had been caught in a Russian village when the war began, and hearing that

a battle was to be waged in the immediately proximity of this village, had decided to get away with her children while there was yet time. Perverse fate led her steps into the thick of the battle instead of away from it. She was unable to tell how this had happened.

"Suddenly," she said, "where there had been rolling meadow-land only a moment before, men in uniform sprang up all around us."

The men carried rifles and little spurts of smoke and flame issued from them and from innumerable points several hundred yards away which seemed suspended in midair. This she guessed to be the fire of the enemy. Suddenly a terrific noise burst all around her. Men came running up to her. She was terribly frightened for she thought they meant to kill her and her children, but instead of this they dragged her behind an earthwork, bidding her, by signs, huddle in back of that for protection. The cannonading continued all afternoon and evening and through the night. As long as there was light enough to see she saw men suddenly throw up their arms and fall down on their faces, or their back, or simply crumple up.

The night fell cold and damp. Soldiers came and threw blankets to her and the children. Other soldiers gave her black bread and water and bade her, again by signs, remain where she was. The older children ate the bread and drank the water and fell asleep. The youngest child was a little over a year old. It was too young to eat the soggy Russian bread and it cried with cold and hunger until midnight. Then—as she thought—it slept.

All night the dreadful noise of the heavy guns continued. There came momentary lulls in the cannonading, and then she heard the moaning of the wounded and the dying. When day broke she saw that there were many dead, and the infant at her breast was dead also. It had succumbed to hunger and to exposure.

The men came and buried the baby for her. Officers came and deliberated upon her plight. Finally she and the two surviving children were put into an army automobile and driven to the nearest large town, some twenty miles away. Here she sought out the American consul, who took her home with him to his wife. The excellent couple cared for her and made all arrangements for her

home journey. This, however, was delayed unexpectedly. Her second son had contracted a heavy cold during the night on which her baby had died, which developed into pneumonia. He died within a few days.

She returned to America via Germany, Belgium and Holland. At the Dutch frontier she met an American family of wealth who were utterly destitute because the letters of credit which they carried had become worthless, gold being demanded everywhere in payment for everything—board, commodities and transportation. She had enough money left to loan the wife, daughters and son of a Kansas millionaire the price of steerage transportation. She herself came steerage also because no more cabin berths were available and she was loth to delay her departure for home by another day. The man of the party whom she had succored seemed to have gone out of his mind. All he seemed able to think about was the loss of his pink silk pajamas.

Such, in brief, was the story of Mrs. Vanbrugh.

She and her husband and their sole surviving child, a handsome alert lad of twelve, called at the Geddes home the Sunday after their arrival at Three Corners, and told their story.

"Did you see anything of the devastation in Belgium?" Mrs. Geddes asked.

"Nothing but smiling fields and acre upon acre of rich farm lands."

"You may be sure," little Tom Vanbrugh spoke up, "that the Germans didn't send us along the route that covers Liège, Brussels and Louvain. You may be sure of that."

"Tom," said his mother, "the German soldiers with whom we traveled were very kind to us."

"Well, why wouldn't they?" said little Tom. "We're Americans. We're neutrals. We're feeding Belgium—or are going to. Think what that is going to save Germany. She couldn't let the entire population of Belgium starve. Now could she?"

"I'm afraid she could and she would, Tom," said his father, somberly.

"Anyhow," said the son, "they didn't come and offer us bread the way those Russian soldiers did. It was bum bread, sour and heavy and it had a perfectly horrid taste,

but it was the best thing they had, and not too much of, either, and they gave it to us."

"Yes," said Mrs. Vanbrugh, "when I think of the kindness of those Russians, who took thought of us at a time when every moment might be their last, the tears come to my eyes. Indeed, one of the men who had thrown us a blanket at sundown, lay dead only a few yards away from us when morning came. In the past, before this horrible thing descended upon the world, I used to think that if I lost one of my children I would become stark, raving mad. And here I am, having lost my two youngest boys under most harrowing conditions, and I am quite calm, even cheerful.

"You have been marvelously brave, my dear," said her husband.

"It's not bravery or courage at all," said Mrs. Vanbrugh, "it's something I simply cannot give a name to. Whenever I begin to sorrow for my little ones, the thought of all the mothers the world over, who are sending their sons out to do battle for what they think right, sweeps over me. Some women, I have read, have as many as five or six sons in the field. Both of my babies died in my arms. I know where they are laid away in their eternal sleep. Their souls, I trust, have come safe to harbor. They were innocent children when they died, who had given pain to no one, who had given nothing but pleasure to their father and myself. But how about those mothers who have four or five or six sons in the field? Some of them must have become smirched with life. Their souls are not as white as a child's. Does bravery in battle wipe away other stains? Or does the killing and maiming of fellow-beings, though they are our country's foes, place a new stain there? I lie awake nights asking myself these questions, asking myself how those other mothers feel who, like myself, are lying awake asking themselves the same questions, who, unlike myself have not a vicarious but a direct interest in their solution. And then—then my own sorrow is as nought."

"My dear, my dear," said Mr. Vanbrugh, gently touching his wife's hand. She began to sob, harsh, dry sobs without the alleviation of tears. Her husband, with a look of apology to Mrs. Geddes, placed his arm about

his wife's shoulder, while little Tom Vanbrugh knelt down at his mother's knee.

"Mother," he said, "I will never do anything bad or wicked like those men you speak of. I promise, mother. Nothing that will ever make you feel it would have been better for me to have died with the others."

Mrs. Vanbrugh caught her son tempestuously to her breast. Her sobs stopped and tears flowed silently down her cheeks. In spite of her heroic protestations she was weeping for the little ones whom she had buried in far-away Russia.

"Just what do you think the real issue is?" Professor Geddes inquired of Mr. Vanbrugh. "Is it Slav against Teuton?"

"I do not think it is anything as simple as that," said Mrs. Vanbrugh.

"One civilization pitted against another—do you call that simple?" Professor Geddes inquired, smiling.

"It might conceivably be simple compared to other issues," Mr. Vanbrugh replied, thoughtfully. "Of course, the Germans have done dreadful things—I beg your pardon," he concluded lamely, addressing Grossvater Geddes.

"Not at all!" Grossvater Geddes waved the apology aside. "I shall have to accustom myself to hearing people say that. But I know it is not true. I know the so-called atrocities are a myth." He produced the editorial from the "Times." "Read for yourself," he said.

Mr. Vanbrugh had read the editorial on the day it appeared. He commented upon the fine irony of events since then.

"But," said Grossvater Geddes, "your good wife says she saw no devastated fields as they passed through Belgium. Well?"

Mr. Vanbrugh bit his lip.

"In Amsterdam she met some American refugees," he said, finally, with evident reluctance, "and they told grisly tales. They had come from the part of Belgium occupied by German troops."

Little Tom Vanbrugh rose abruptly and strode from the room, whistling.

"Tom overheard some of those stories," said his father,

in explanation, "and whenever we get near the subject he simply leaves the room."

"Surely," said Grossvater Geddes, "you do not believe everything you are told by strangers."

"Father," said Professor Geddes, "those people were Americans."

"And because Americans say it is true must it be believed?" The old man was terribly stirred. "Yet you ask me to put no faith in my own race—to believe all these slanders against it! War is terrible, always. But Germans, I trust, are as humane toward the conquered as other races."

Professor Geddes and Mr. Vanbrugh exchanged looks.

"Father," said Professor Geddes, with a mildness particularly exasperating to his already exasperated father, "you speak of your own race. Americans, you know, have no 'own race'——"

"Ah!" his father broke in excitedly, "the Anglo-Americans consider themselves the only true Americans. I suppose, Mr. Vanbrugh, you also believe those stories about the German Uhlan officers eating Belgian babies?"

"No," said Mr. Vanbrugh, "I do not believe that."

"Well, in time you will believe that, too," said Grossvater Geddes, and walked statelily from the room.

"Poor father," said Professor Geddes. "When he realizes what things the Germans are doing in Belgium it will go hard with him."

Meanwhile it was going hard with Guido, for to him by this time, a complete realization had been vouchsafed.

"I am filled with shame," he said to Professor Geddes one day, "when I realize that the race I sprang from is doing these shocking things."

"Get rid of that feeling," Professor Geddes said peremptorily. "In giving way to it you are tacitly admitting that you are insufficiently Americanized. Germany should be no more to you than any other alien state."

"She isn't," said Guido, stoutly.

"Then why should she have the power to fill you either with shame or with pride?" Professor Geddes pursued.

"No, my dear boy, Germany is nothing and never was anything to Americans. If there is such a thing as a

close bond between ourselves and any European country it unites us not with Germany but with——”

“England,” Guido said, quickly.

“Exactly,” said Professor Geddes. “I admit the claims of race there.”

“Do you not mean the claims of spiritual kinship?” Guido inquired.

“Exactly,” Professor Geddes replied, with a smile so subtle that Guido wondered whether he had not purposely used the lax expression.

Nevertheless the sensation of shame of which Guido had complained, persisted. He longed to unbosom himself of this feeling to someone who would understand, someone who, like Otto or Elschen, were in the identical plight as himself. So strong was this feeling that he left for home a week earlier than he had expected to.

Almost the first person whom he encountered on leaving the railroad station was Dr. Koenig. Guido hailed him and received a scowl in return. The old physician had been in a most unenviable frame of mind since parting with Guido at Waldheim. The Great Experiment, the Political Synthesis, had for years been his favorite toy. What were mere books on political economy and religion compared to the human treatise, the speculation in blood and flesh which was being fashioned before his very eyes? No parent ever watched his offspring more eagerly for signs of a specific talent than Dr. Koenig, throughout a decade, had watched Guido for symptoms of the budding Synthesis. That he could not posit, or even remotely imagine, in what way the Synthesis was to come about, or in what way the symptoms would break out, had made the decade-long vigil the more fascinating. He had, moreover, a tremendous faith in the boy. Then, too, he had confided the theory of the Political Synthesis, in which by this time he felt almost a possessive sense, to his old friend Geddes. To discover on the top of all this that the boy was a mere backslider, a miserable apostate to the doctrines for which his illustrious ancestor, the first Guido, had bled and suffered, was a disappointment and a humiliation not to be endured with patience.

He regarded Guido stonily as the boy stood beside him, smiling, flushed, cap in hand.

"Dr. Koenig, I was coming to see you this very evening. I wanted you to know—I've come around entirely—it's heinous what Germany had done and is doing!" ✓

Both of Dr. Koenig's strong hands shot out and grasped Guido's. He ejaculated:

"Ah, so blood does tell, after all."

And before Guido could demand an explanation of this strange remark, Dr. Koenig said:

"You are going to find this town a mighty interesting place to live in, my lad. Come and see me some evening this week. It's too warm and too noisy to stand and talk in the street."

Guido discovered within the next ten minutes that dull, quiet Anasquoit had indeed become an exciting place to live in. Bismarck Street was a thoroughfare on which no ingrained Anasquoitian might walk a block without encountering a familiar face. The first friend Guido stumbled upon as he walked home from the station was Eddie Erdman, the facetious boy-milliner. The talk of course drifted to the War. 7

"I've never been so proud of being German in all my life as now," said Eddie.

"Proud!" gasped the amazed Guido.

"Think what they've accomplished! And so quickly! All those 'impregnable' cities. Why, Guido, it brings back the time of the *'alte Fritz'*. Frederick the Great would have every reason to be proud of his great-great-grandson, eh? I can tell you, I wish I had been born on the other side. I've always had a sneaking thought that this emigration business was all wrong. German is German, English is English and French is French. How can any man really and truly expatriate himself? It's signing away the birthright of unborn generations which no man has a right to do. I tell you what. After the war is over, I'm going back to Germany. S'long, Guido. Come and see me some evening and we'll toast the greatest Hohenzollern of all."

Guido stared after the vanishing figure of his ample friend in blank amazement. He was dumbfounded. And yet he, too, within the year, had thought William the greatest of the Hohenzollerns!

At the next corner he ran into Henry Foerster, the silent boy.

"Well, how about the War, Henry?" Guido inquired.

"Great," Henry replied. "Magnificent, unheard of."

"Surely, Henry, you're not serious," said Guido. "I think the War, and Germany's part in it, damnable."

"I think Germany is doing the most wonderful thing that has ever been done in all history." This, for Henry, was downright eloquence.

"Do you call it wonderful to violate solemn treaties and invade neutral countries?"

"But Belgium was not a neutral country. The Belgians are a bad lot anyway, so what's the use of making such a fuss over them."

Guido stared.

"It's all England's doing anyhow," said the Laconian, who was laconic no more. "England's so frantically jealous of Germany. The British have hogged everything in sight so long and now they are afraid of Germany. So they plotted to dismember her."

Still Guido merely stared.

"A cousin of mine," Henry continued, "who was an officer in the German army until two years ago, explained the whole thing to me. You come around some evening and I'll ask my cousin around, too, so he can explain it to you the way he did to me."

"Thanks awfully," said Guido, who at last had found his tongue, "but I prefer to do my own thinking."

"But without a German's explanation of the situation you are bound to think wrong," Henry replied, calmly.

Guido ignored this.

"What did you mean by saying Belgium hadn't been neutral?" he asked.

"If Belgium had been truly neutral she would not have refused to allow the Germans to march through," Henry replied. "If she had been neutral she would not have cared which of the Powers were successful, would she? She wouldn't have objected to Germany's stealing a march on the others. By objecting, she showed her animosity. So much the worse for her. Germany is going to be successful anyway. My cousin told me all about it. The German army is the greatest and the finest and the best

disciplined fighting machine which the world has ever seen."

"Everybody knows that," said Guido.

"Well," Henry continued, "if everybody knows it why does anybody have the audacity to try and stop Germany, or attempt to fight her, or to keep her down? Germany is going to beat all the others to a frazzle. Just you wait and see."

Guido was appalled. He was paralyzed by the shock of seeing unfolded before his eyes, without any appearance of shame, a psychology so twisted and perverted and unsound as this.

"The stupidity of the other powers is incredible," Henry continued. "If they had any sense at all they would ask for peace right now and accept Germany's terms."

"But when a country is invaded like Belgium, and like France, its men will fight, fight, fight to the last man in order to throw the invaders out."

"Germany should worry," Henry replied, calmly. "If England, France and Belgium want to commit suicide, it's their affair, not Germany's. I should not have said England. She will let other people do her fighting for her, as she has done in all previous wars. Those that are stupid enough, that is. India, of course, will rebel against the oppressive rule of the English invader. Australia will probably declare for independence. Shouldn't wonder if Canada made a move in the same direction. Egypt will rise. The Boer Republic has an old score still to settle. Oh, you are going to see things happen, my boy. Germany's heroic move will liberate all the peoples who have suffered from British misrule so long."

"And do you really wish that all these things should come to pass?" Guido inquired.

"Why not? Serve England good and right."

"But why do you hate England so?"

"Oh, the Revolution and all that."

"But we were successful in the Revolution, so why should we nourish a grudge against England on that account? Besides, you know as well as I do that the best men in England were opposed to the Stamp Act. I speak of Pitt, of Burke, of Wilkes, of Fox and others."

"Well, all the same England deserves to get it in the

neck, and, don't worry! Germany will see to it that England gets all that is coming to her. For in war might makes right. If the Americans had not been successful in '76, the Revolution and not the Civil War would have gone down in history as the Great Rebellion."

"I think," said Guido, "if you could forget your antecedents for a while, if you could bring yourself to think as an American and not as a German-American, you would admit that Germany is all wrong."

"Oh, if it were a case of Germany against the United States that, of course, would be an entirely different matter," said Henry. "Naturally I would then side with the U. S. A."

"Whether we were right or wrong?" Guido asked, with growing wonder.

"One sides with one's own as a matter of course," replied Henry. "But when the quarrel is between England and Germany, naturally I side with Germany." And he began to enumerate the undesirable traits of the British. The English were stiff, "poky," insincere, inefficient, greedy, rude, conceited and opinionated. Guido thought of Cecil and smiled. He had known Henry almost all his life and Cecil a few months only; Henry was of the same race as himself, and Cecil was of a different race. Yet he felt a stronger sense of kinship for Cecil than he felt for Henry or for Eddie.

Guido parted from Henry feeling sick at heart. He felt an inordinate yearning to see Otto. He longed to see someone who would understand his emotions—someone who shared the detestable feeling of shame which seemed to be gnawing itself into his very heart. To Guido's initial and primary sense of shame was now added the secondary shame of seeing his former schoolmates applauding a cause which to him seemed unspeakably base. In Otto, who was honesty personified, he felt certain he would find the sympathy he craved. Otto would share his sense of shame. He longed to hear Otto enlarge upon the situation in the terse and vigorous German, which he spoke so much more easily than English. To hear Germany denounced in racy, idiomatic German—nothing less would quench the fires of indignation which Henry and Eddie had fed anew.

It never occurred to Guido that Otto might have committed himself to the orthodox German cause.

"Why," thought Guido, "if I hadn't been anti-German before, I'd have turned pro-Ally after hearing those two mouth it."

He turned down Juniper Street, on which the Baumgartens now lived in an unpretentious house, and five minutes later was closeted with Otto.

"I'm awfully glad to see you, Otto," Guido began. "I've missed our talks. And so much has happened."

"The War? Well, it's not going to last long," Otto rejoined, cheerfully. "The Germans are sweeping everything before them. It will all be over soon, thanks to German military genius."

Guido's blood congealed. Otto's defection was to him a disaster of the first magnitude.

"Surely," he stammered, "you are not pro-German, too! Not you, Otto, *nicht Du!*"

"*Ja, was soll ich denn sonst sein,*" Otto retorted. "You didn't expect to find me pro-British, did you?"

"Don't let's drag England in," Guido said, quickly. Otto, so honest, so upright could surely not be an apologist for Germany's crimes. "England has nothing to do with it at all."

"England has everything to do with it," Otto cried, and repeated the charge which Henry had already made. "England is at the bottom of the plot to dismember Germany."

"But how do you know such a plot exists?" Guido demanded.

"Why, every German knows it," Otto retorted. "That's why Germany went to war. That's why Germany will succeed, because she is right, and fortunately had the foresight to prepare for this day!"

"But all this is only hearsay and supposition," said Guido.

"Beg pardon, Guido. It is a matter of common knowledge that England, Russia and France formed a secret alliance."

"For defensive purposes only—like England's treaty with Japan," Guido replied, quickly.

"If you are simple enough to believe that I am sorry for

you," Otto said. "England's scheme was to trump up some sort of a case against Germany and then get France and Russia to help her dismember Germany. The British Empire was built up through systematic land-grabbing. Gibraltar——"

"Schleswig-Holstein," Guido countered. "I'll wager Prussia did quite as much land-grabbing, or more, as Great Britain."

"It was right that Schleswig-Holstein should be turned over to Germany," said Otto, doggedly. "We were taught in school——"

Again Guido interrupted his friend.

"Otto," he said, with great earnestness, "I have learned more real German history this summer from men who lived it than we were ever taught in school. There's the case of Alsace-Lorraine——"

"Alsace-Lorraine is German in language, in spirit, in nationality, and desires to remain German," said Otto.

"You are mistaken," Guido cried. "I read an article this summer written by a German and published in a German magazine in which the writer deplores the fact that after forty years under German rule the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine remain as French in spirit as they were in 1870."

"If any German wrote that, he lied," said Otto, with finality.

Guido became intensely agitated.

"One cannot argue with you," he cried, angrily. "The moment an argument goes against you, you cry 'A lie!'"

"Well," said Otto, tranquilly, "it is a lie. Every German knows that Alsace-Lorraine is German in spirit. Besides, it was *deutsches Reichland* for centuries. France stole it from Germany two hundred and fifty years ago."

Guido gritted his teeth. He was getting his first taste of the unflattering and offensive language in which it was the habit of the German sympathizers to cry down every remark inimical to the Fatherland.

"There is such a thing as a statute of limitations," he said. "The laws of every country recognize that after a certain period a legal right to any parcel of land is established by occupation unless claim is made and upheld in

the meantime by the previous owner. Here in Jersey, I believe, the statute allows twenty years."

"Well," said Otto, "twice twenty is forty. If twenty years applies to an individual, I imagine forty years is good enough for a country to establish a legal right to occupied land, according to your own logic. Therefore Germany is entitled to Alsace-Lorraine."

Until this moment, in spite of his abusive language and insolent tone, Otto had shown a tendency to employ the white magic of honorable argument, not the black magic of sophistry. Guido's heart sank within him.

"Otto," he said, in a sort of frenzy of earnestness, "you cannot, you simply cannot believe that the violation of Belgium is right."

"Of course the violation of Belgium is not right," Otto said, adding significantly, "if it was a violation. The Germans seem to be very certain that French officers were in Belgium before war was declared. There must have been some definite understanding—perhaps the Belgians had given France permission to march through her territory. That being so you will admit that Germany was right to take time by the forelock and get ahead of France."

"But Germany merely supposes all these awful things," Guido objected. "She can prove nothing."

"Germany believes these things to be true, therefore was justified in doing what she did," said Otto, dogmatically.

"But believing a man to be a robber doesn't make him a robber."

"No, but it gives me the right to arm myself against him."

"And to shoot him at sight?"

"Certainly," Otto replied, calmly, "if I am morally certain of my grounds."

And this from the boy who had thrown up a job which he desperately needed because it was against his principles to type profanities!

Guido took up his hat and went to the door.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Otto.

"I am," said Guido, "I am more ashamed of my German blood than I can say."

"Shame on you for that!" Otto cried. "Every other

German is proud of his blood! Think what they've accomplished! Why, Guido, it's glorious, glorious! Oh, shame on you, shame on you not to stand by your own race."

Guido quivered with anger in every nerve.

"I am an American, not a German, though my parents were German-born," he said, quietly.

"Americans are a ~~mixed race~~," said Otto, disdainfully. "There is no harm in being proud of one's pure racial strain, if one happens to have it. And German blood is the best in the world."

"Good-bye," said Guido abruptly.

A species of spiritual nausea invaded him. His faith in human nature had been struck at. The mantle of righteousness which Guido had fancied as accruing unconditionally to Otto, had been sullied and rent. Why, he asked himself bitterly, should race prejudice possess this sinister power to warp men's sense of right and wrong, to vitiate their conscience and undermine their honesty?

Suddenly a terrifying thought occurred to him, leaving him panic-stricken and shaken.

What if his mother were pro-German, too?

"It's not possible," he said, speaking a loud in his agitation, "it is simply not possible."

But in spite of this passionate denial, fear held him by the hand, and he had a palpitating sense of apprehension as he mounted the stoop to his house.

Frau Ursula had seen him from the sitting-room window, and had run to the door and had it open and her boy in her arms before Guido had time to touch the door-bell. In the joy of the meeting Guido for the moment forgot the fear which had tortured him so cruelly.

"*Mutterchen!*" he held her at arm's length. "You are more beautiful than I have ever seen you! *Mutterchen!* Dear, silly little *Mutterchen*, you are blushing at your boy's compliment like a young girl!" And he fell to hugging her anew, wondering at the quickened brightness of her eyes, at the indescribable sweetness that seemed to hover about her like an impalpable cloud, at the tender smile that seemed to have become part and parcel of the corners of her mouth.

"Mother, you are as lovely as a young girl in love," he assured her. She pretended to be indignant with him,

but she did not succeed very well. Her happiness wore too bright a halo. It would not be quenched.

"Really, Guido," she said, smiling and dimpling, "this language to your mother is unseemly. Besides, what do you know about a young girl in love?"

"I've read about them. As to my language, it's the penalty you pay for being so sweet and so young and so lovely. Mother, I've had a wonderful summer." And he fell to telling her trivialities of which persons who are near and dear to each other speak after a long separation, as if feeling their way back to the old familiar intimacy.

Finally he went to his room without having asked her where she stood on the War.

CHAPTER VI

GUIDO'S instinct had prompted him aright when he said to Frau Ursula, "You are as lovely as a young girl in love." To make the statement complete he should have added: "and whose love is reciprocated."

Frau Ursula, for the first time left alone with her husband after Guido's departure for "Waldheim" had set herself the simple task of making the household, including herself, revolve solely about Hauser, and the secondary task, infinitely more difficult of achievement, of making him realize that the household traveled in an orbit of which he himself was the unchallenged center.

She was a woman both proud and modest. The two qualities were inseparable in her, and she sometimes made her modesty the excuse for her pride. If she had not felt confident, with a confidence so complete that she did not even trouble to voice it, that she still possessed the undivided love of her husband, she could not have set out deliberately to woo him.

She laid out her campaign with the utmost care. She dressed every evening for dinner as carefully as if she were going to the theater or a reception, and she had an unusually large number of new dresses made—dresses of foulard, of crêpe de chine, of voile, of white filmy stuffs classed as "novelties." She had Hauser's favorite dishes served; tried out fanciful new desserts, to which he was partial, and had the table laid with the best china and silver, decorating it with flowers from their own garden. She herself was gracious, witty, bright. Her expectant mood, and her sincere effort to please, threw her white and golden loveliness into bold relief.

Hauser basked gratefully, as a tired, jaded man of affairs will, in the smiles and laughter and wit which his wife shed about him. He did not at first attribute any especial cause or reason to them. At breakfast she was more subdued, subservient, gentler than at dinner, for she knew his

dislike to sustained conversation in the morning. But she was never absent from the breakfast table these days, and she always went to the door with him, and bade him adieu at the very threshold.

One morning, happening to glance back from the corner, he saw her still standing there. She smiled, a little sadly, as he lifted his hat to her. Momentum of mind as well as physical momentum carried him several steps further. Then he turned and came back.

He had understood at last.

His wife was still standing on the steps, as if expecting his return. The smile faded from her face, the color from her cheeks as she saw him turn.

"Ursula," he said, when he stood beside her, "I want to speak to you. Let us go into the house."

Indoors, alone with her, in a privacy which for the first time in years seemed to him exciting and romantic, he said:

"If you mean nothing by all this, by everything you have been doing and saying and looking since you and I are alone, then say so frankly—and stop it. For God's sake, then stop it! But if you do mean that—well—that mutual happiness is still within our reach, then be equally frank with me."

"Mutual happiness!" she said. "Erich, I've dreamed of it."

He caught her roughly by the wrist.

"Ursula, there's no nonsense in this attitude of yours—nothing about making amends, or paying me for being decent—I trust I have been half-ways decent to the boy—or any tommyrot like that, is there?"

"No," she said, with downcast eyes. "No."

"Does that mean that you really care for me? Has the miracle happened? Ursula, has it?"

"Can you not tell me first that you still care for me?" she asked, her voice cool and repressed.

"You know I do," he said, with sudden passion. "You know that you are the only woman in the world for me. Love seizes some men like that. They lose all sense of other women, all feeling for them, all desire for them. It's true. I swear it's true. Ursula, I love you more than words can say. Do you care for me a little? Love me?"

"Yes," she said, her voice vibrant with the love which she had suppressed so long. "I do love you, I do, indeed. Like yourself, I have waited for this moment for years. Unlike yourself, I have worked to bring it about."

"Ursula!" he cried, his face flushing with joy.

"Oh," she said, with a radiant smile. "I am not ashamed to admit that I planned and schemed—that I was glad to have Guido away for the summer——"

"Ursula!" She never forgot the jubilation with which he greeted that remark. It was the most sincere earnest of her love which she could have given him. If Guido's absence had been welcome to her because it facilitated a reconciliation between herself and her husband, she must love him, indeed. Thus argued Hauser.

Her face had become very pink, her voice husky. She flung herself impulsively into his arms, and her face on his shoulder and clung to him convulsively. Finally she lifted her face and her lips to his.

"Ursula—we have waited a long time for a perfect understanding—there has been one false dawn. There must not be another. Are you quite, quite sure that you will not regret——"

"Quite, quite sure," she replied.

"Then, when shall we start on our honeymoon? We'll have to get acquainted again all over, won't we? Can you be ready in say twenty-four hours?"

"I can be ready in six hours," she replied.

"Then," said Hauser, "we'll start to-night. The store will have to run itself for a fortnight. I'll be home around two o'clock. We can start about four and motor down to—to wherever you say."

He took her soft, flushed face between his trembling hands and kissed her twice, thrice on tremulous, half-open lips.

That had been the beginning of the happiest summer Frau Ursula had ever known. She was amazed to find how well-informed and how well-read her husband was. He had read authors of whose works she had merely read reviews. He had from time to time bought expensive sets of books for the library. She had, a little maliciously—since there were times when she assuaged the pain which his seeming diffidence caused her, and underpropped her

stoical exterior as well, by painting him to herself as simply ridiculous—represented him as purchasing those books as furniture necessary to a millionaire's establishment, just as he purchased davenport and library table and elastic book-cases. In more charitable moments she had attributed the purchase of those books to compassion on his part for itinerant book agents. At best she had never supposed that he really read Fiske and Bergson and Haeckel. She was surprised, therefore, in the two weeks during which they were thrown on each other's resources and during which he talked much, that he had read many, if not all of the books which his well-stocked library contained.

If there was one flaw in her happiness it was the thought of Guido. Hauser saw her receive letters from the boy and answer them. Yet never throughout the entire summer did he refer to Guido a single time. When she spoke of Guido, as she sometimes did, Hauser listened with an air of indulgent kindness. Their altered relations barred the suspicion that he was assuming this attitude of silence with the express intention of wounding her. There was only one other tenable supposition: he felt, in all probability, utter indifference for Guido—such a complete, thorough-going indifference that, when Guido was absent, Guido was for him in total eclipse.

Frau Ursula had learned wisdom at the cost of happiness. She prized her new-found happiness too highly to allow this shadow, deep and grave as it was, which lay athwart her path, to trouble her. She knew that she was making Hauser superlatively happy; he was bestowing upon her the same felicitude. Guido's civility to Hauser, Hauser's to Guido, had left nothing to be desired in the past. There was no reason to fear that it would suffer a breach in the future.

All during that summer he had dwelt, gently meditative, on the curious versatility of the human heart in thus passionately loving two creatures so inimical to each other.

She had not realized that happiness had wrought so extraordinary a change in her appearance. Guido, having washed and freshened up, returned to her and commented upon it anew. And now she noticed that there was a nervousness in his manner which it had lacked before.

Suddenly, without warning, he shot the all-important question at her.

"*Mutterchen*, now do you feel about the War? Pro-German?"

Frau Ursula dropped the stocking she was darning into her lap and regarded Guido with mild amusement.

"My son," she said, gently, "how would you feel if anyone asked you that question?"

"I should resent it," said Guido.

"And so do I," quoth Frau Ursula.

Guido gasped, laughed and jubilated.

✓ But his mother had suddenly fallen silent. She was very grave as she bade him listen attentively to what she was about to say. Hauser, it seems, was taking the typical German view. Why he should do so Frau Ursula did not attempt to explain or to discover. It was, to her, inexplicable. But, as it was, it was. She implored Guido to observe discretion and tact and to refrain from willfully angering his father. Guido, in the immensity of his relief at finding his mother orthodox, was entirely willing to cheerfully gloss over his father's heterodoxy. After all, what did his father signify? It was his mother who mattered.

For a long time it seemed that the gods were with Frau Ursula. Guido was much engrossed with the opening of the college, his matriculation, the return of Professor Geddes and his family, the comparing of Janet and Elschen, point for point, and with getting acquainted with the young men in his class. He was much engrossed also, in quarreling about the War with Otto, who, having accepted Guido's substantial loan, had embarked on the four-years' course at the "Tech" along with Guido and Stanley.

For Otto had plunged headlong into the frenzied orgy of hatred for all things not German, and more particularly for all things British, which was the sinister flower of the early days of the War. There was neither rhyme nor reason to this hatred. It had sprung, no one could tell from what polluted soil.

"A forced bloom from some hot-bed in hell," said Guido to Professor Geddes in a spasm of reactionary anger after one of Otto's intemperate discourses.

Professor Geddes removed his glasses and bent them gently against his knuckles.

"An excellent phrase," he said, "but, although I am not your professor in English, I would like to point out to you that profanity, semi-occasionally injected into one's talk, produces the same effect upon the sensory nerves as the sharp, explosive sound of fire-works; but this galvanizing effect fails, becoming tawdry and vulgar, when profanity changes from the exceptional to the customary."

Having delivered himself of which impromptu lecture, the Professor calmly restored his glasses to his nose.

Guido smiled.

"Really, sir," he said, "it's enough to try the patience of Job to hear Otto go on. Otto, now Otto is really a fine character."

"A splendid boy, none finer," the Professor generously interpolated.

"But here he has turned his notions of right and wrong topsy-turvy——"

"Has he really?" Professor Geddes interrupted Guido. "I think you are misjudging the German-American, and—for that matter—the German attitude. I think the country at large, the entire world, is misjudging it. I am not speaking of the powers that be, of the Hohenzollerns and their minions. I'm speaking of the average German man and woman."

"But, sir, they are very, very unfair—so blindly partisan where they themselves are concerned, so blindly unjust to their foe."

"True. But I would like you to answer me one question before we continue, Guido. Why are we justified in censuring the faults of others and commenting upon them?"

"Because they deserve to be criticised, of course," Guido replied, with some warmth.

"Well, I may be wrong, of course," said Professor Geddes, "but I take a slightly different view. I think the only excuse we have for censuring the faults of others is the expectation that, in clearly apprehending these faults, we may hope to avoid falling into similar bad habits."

Guido was considerably abashed by this reproof.

"Of course, sir," he assented, weakly.

"And now," said the Professor, tell me in what way Otto and your other German friends have reversed their sense of right and wrong."

"Well, they seem just plain drunk with the military success of the Germans," said Guido.

"True. If their cause were just, as you and I know it to be unjust, they would be justified in being thus inebriated. They, however, believe their cause to be a just one."

✓ "How can they?" Guido cried, excitedly. "Germany's guilt is plain as way to parish church, isn't it? Every argument which tells against them they brush aside as 'English lies.' Every kind deed done by America they ascribe to 'American hypocrisy' or 'American subserviency to Britain.' It's disgusting. I wish the thing had actually happened which they pretend would have happened if Germany had not violated Belgium and invaded France. I mean, that France and England would have invaded Germany. It would have served them good and right to have their houses burned over their heads, their farms ruined, their aged made homeless."

"In other words, you would have punished Germany for the intended offense, as she, according to her lights, is chastising Belgium and France! For you understand, of course, what is not generally understood, that the spirit which animates the German soldier is a punitive, a defensive spirit. The Junkers and the Potsdam gang may have been toasting 'The Day' for decades, for all we know. But the peasant in the fields, the man in the street, the clerk in the *Bureau*, all these knew nothing of 'The Day.' What they do know—or rather think they know—is that Russia, England and France wanted to dismember Germany, wanted to plunder the Fatherland and to enslave her millions."

"They can't really believe such rot," Guido exclaimed, disgustedly.

"They do. Read this."

Professor Geddes handed Guido the original German version of Lissauer's famous—or infamous—"Chant of Hate."

Guido read it in silence.

"You we will hate with a lasting hate;
We will never forego our hate—
Hate by water and hate by land,
Hate of the head and hate of the hand,
Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,
Hate of seventy millions, choking down;
We love as one, we hate as one,
We have one foe and one alone—
ENGLAND!"

"Well?" Professor Geddes inquired as Guido, having finished reading the outrageous fustian, sat staring stupidly at the table.

"Why, it's—it's taken my breath away," said Guido. "It's vitriolic. It's infamous. It's madness. It's scurrilous and noisome. It's obscene."

"You are right," Professor Geddes rejoined. "It is obscene. Hatred is obscenity, for hatred means a prostituting of the spiritual energies and functions to base purposes. And therein lies the crime of the German people. They are not conquest-mad but hate-mad. As a race, Germans possess the power of idealization in a pre-eminent degree. It is a precious gift, but, like every other gift, contains in itself the germ of a corresponding fault. There was a time when Germany was completely under French influence. Frederick the Great disdained his native German as a vehicle of poetry and wrote poor French in preference. Then came a time when Germany saw in England the Alpha and Omega of virtue and wisdom and initiative. This attitude, no doubt, was due largely to the fact that without England's aid, Germany would have continued indefinitely, perhaps eternally, under French rule following the Napoleonic invasions. Now Germany has gone to the opposite extreme. She either defies or anathematizes. She idealizes or execrates. She knows nothing of the golden mean which is the pleasant habit of races practicing mental temperance. The German phlegm, of which we have heard so much in the past, is merely an outer accouterment. The German mind is much too enthusiastic to be well poised. Enthusiasm, another exquisite grace charged with a fatal germ, makes the German self-assertive, dogmatic, seemingly ill-bred, tactless and unfair. It is prone, also, to

make him appear a trifle grotesque. At any rate, in allowing hatred completely to usurp his reason, the German has opened the gates of his mind to the most preposterous and heinous heresies which the modern world has yet seen."

"Many Americans seem to think that the German people are simply being forced to fight," Guido suggested.

✓ "You cannot force several million men to fight. Not now-a-days. We are only on the threshold of the mightiest drama which has ever taken place, and as the play proceeds, and scene after scene is enacted, many things which now are dark and incomprehensible, may become plain. But one thing is perfectly plain now. Whether of spontaneous growth, or artificially fostered for obvious reasons by the military clique, hatred of England, based on fear of England, is the dominant motive actuating the average German to-day. Hate of England is the cohesive agent which is binding all Germany together as one man. It is the force that is energizing Germany's millions to-day."

"Fear——?" Guido caught at the one word. "The Germans would resent that charge more than any other. Fear means cowardice!" His thoughts flew back to Dobronov. Dobronov's diagnosis tallied with the Professor's, a fact so startling that Guido said nothing more.

"Not necessarily," the Professor retorted. "Cowardice is fear of fearing a thing, fear of fear, in other words. Courage, if not fearless in encountering the thing feared, is at least fearless of fear."

"Well," said Guido, "all this does not disprove my statement that Otto is turning himself topsy-turvy in order to play the apologist for Germany. Why, sir," he continued, warming to his subject, "I have seen Otto as a boy pick up a dog that had been run down by an auto, and, on finding that nothing could be done for the poor brute, use the money which he had saved up for a 'pure' to purchase chloroform with which to end the mongrel's agony. And when we were children Otto told me that he used to lie awake nights crying because I was ill and in pain. And this soft, tender-hearted boy thinks the violation of Belgium regrettable but natural and proper."

"Does he think the atrocities natural and proper?"

"He denies them, of course. 'English lies' to befuddle America!"

"Just you wait until he finds out that they are not 'English lies.' Just you wait until all the German sympathizers find out that Germany, and not England, has been doing all the befuddling."

"But will they find out? And if they do, will it really make any difference? You know, Professor Geddes, there are folks who say that this *Schrecklichkeit* is not merely the sum total of individual excesses, such as happen in every war, but is part of a premeditated game."

"I have heard the same charge made," Professor Geddes replied. "Of course, in every war a certain amount of that sort of thing is bound to occur, is, in fact, considered indispensable. During the Boer War, Lord Kitchener laid waste huge tracts of land. Sherman, in his March to the Sea, destroyed the crops in the fields and drove the cattle before him so that no other army—coming after his—might find food or provender."

"Yes, but neither had his men shoot the aged and the infirm and bayonet children and drive old women before them to protect themselves against the enemy fire, or gouge out the eyes of the wounded, and cut off the hands of civilians——"

Professor Geddes rose and began striding up and down the apartment. His agitation was intense. He did not speak until he had regained his self-control.

"I refuse to believe those stories until we have absolute proof that they are true," he said. "Some of them *cannot* be true. When I spoke of 'atrocities' I meant the shooting of innocent civilians as a punitive measure for 'sniping.' The other outrages—I cannot, I will not, believe them."

"Then you think, too, that those stories are deliberately manufactured for circulation in America?"

"No! A thousand times, No! But there is such a thing as the war lie—an unconscious exaggeration at first hand; at second hand, exaggeration for artistic purposes; at third hand, exaggeration for moral purposes; all falsifications being performed subconsciously as it were, and strangest of all, accepted as soon as uttered as truth by

the falsifier himself. The psychology of the war lie awaits explanation at the hands of a future Freud."

"Still," Guido persisted, "anyone telling or repeating such a lie must have some sense of his turpitude."

"Yes, of course, if they were deliberate liars, which they are not. In case of isolated atrocities, which, no doubt, have occurred, the same temporary inhibition of the moral sense and moral judgment must be cited not in extenuation but in explanation. Ordinarily, only the most hardened criminals and moral perverts would be capable of such outrages. You see my point, don't you?"

"My mind sees it but my heart doesn't," said Guido. "Why, sir, would you believe it? After a very stormy session with Otto last night, before I could sleep, I had a little evening hate of my own as a nightcap. I killed off half a dozen Germans with my own hands. I bayoneted them. I shot them. I stabbed them. I bombed them. I committed assassination as cold-blooded as that at Serejevo. I tried to picture what these fiendish German officers are like, what sort of werewolf fluid flows in their veins in place of blood. I concocted unheard-of tortures for them and discarded them as quickly as invented as far too mild and gentle. And I hated and detested as I never hated and detested before in all my life. And I've indulged in some pretty little hates on my account in the past, believe me!"

"Have a care," said Professor Geddes. "'Ware of hatred. You see the pass to which it's brought the Germans. Consider, if indulged in, to what pass it might bring you."

"I suppose I am making a fool of myself," said Guido, but without contrition.

Professor Geddes laid his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Your making a fool of yourself has done me a world of good," he said. "I'll 'fess up. A few minutes ago I was on the point of making a fool of myself. That's the worst of hatred—like begets like—and it's a villainous progeny to unloose upon the world. Let's keep our hearts clean of hatred, Guido. Let us condemn, and be indignant, and fight for the right if we can and may, but don't let us lower ourselves to the level to which the Germans have sunk."

Janet had come into the room while her father was speaking.

"Oh, Daddykins," she said. "Apropos of the War. Guido has not yet met Herr Casimir Wesendonck. Some name, Guido. What?"

"Some name," Guido assented. "He ought to have a succulent title to set it off properly."

"Well, he hasn't. Not even a miserable little 'von' and that is no fun for him, poor thing, for he almost doubles up with reverence when speaks of the *hohe Adel* of Allemania."

"Janet," said her father with severity, "how often have I told you that puns——"

"Millions of times, Daddy. If not millions, then as many as we each have ancestors in the twentieth generation plus."

"Plus what?" Guido demanded.

"Plus the ancestors who, being connecting links, are wedged in between. Daddy, did you ever figure it out? If each ancestor could count once only, we never would have been achieved, for there weren't enough people living at one time twenty generations back to go round as ancestors for even a single one us. So we must have shared ancestors. Perhaps, Daddykins, Dr. Koenig and the Kaiser had the same ancestor or ancestress. Wouldn't that be funny?"

"Janet, we were discussing the War," said the Professor, mildly reproving.

"How can you—without Herr Casimir Wesendonck's able assistance? Daddy, we'll ask mother to have him over for dinner next Sunday and then Guido can see the creature disport himself."

Our stern young moralist did not approve of levity in connection with the War. But Janet irrepressible was Janet irresistible. Guido laughed.

"Just what's the matter with Casimir?" he inquired.

"Oh, he suffers from a complication of ailments. Ailment number one—common as a cold-in-the-head—a swelled head."

Professor Geddes threw up his hands in mock despair and retreated to his desk.

"Guido," he said, feebly, "take Janet to the drawing-room."

"Not before you hear whether my diagnosis of Casimir is correct," said Janet. "Ailment number two, very, very serious. No absolute cure recorded as yet. Anglophobia! Ailment number three almost always fatal, especially when occurring in malignant form, and our poor friend, I am so sorry to say, has contracted the disease in the most virulent form known. Furor Teutonicus!"

"Janet, will you——"

"I will. Oh, my august father. Obedient to your most honorable wishes, I efface my most humble and miserable self, taking with me our honorific visitor."

From Janet's nonsensical talk Guido was prepared for a middle-aged German of the futile, boorish type.

He was considerably surprised, therefore, on meeting Herr Wesendonck a few Sundays later, to see a singularly handsome, tall, well-set-up young man of about twenty-five, who carried with him an air of mingled *bon camaraderie* and courtesy which inevitably invited the description of "gallant." He seemed out of place in the faultless civilian clothes which he wore. Guido had a quick vision of him as he might appear in the white and golden uniform of the Cuirassiers in which the Kaiser had been so fond of presenting himself in ante-bellum days. He was very fair. His hair was a deep, soft gold and his eyes were blue, as became a true Teuton. His skin was rosy with health. He was, all in all, a very attractive young fellow and, truth to tell, Guido became woefully, hopelessly, desperately jealous of him the moment he saw him. The splendor of young Wesendonck's personality shed a new light on Janet's ridicule of him. Doubtless she was in love with him—why shouldn't she be?—and was employing ridicule to disguise her real feelings.

Dinner passed off very pleasantly indeed. Wesendonck represented a type of German that Guido had never met. He had manner as well as manners, conversation as well as small talk, and knew perfectly when and where each was in place. He was an excellent raconteur and filled conversational gaps at table with lively anecdotes quickly and fluently told. Even Cecil seemed crude and awkward beside him. By the time dinner was over and before ever

a word had been said about the War, Guido hated him valiantly with a hatred in which there was no desire to make a beastly vulgarian of himself by using bayonet or bomb. The hatred with which he was filled was just a polite, drawing-room sort of hatred in which annihilation is envisaged but not actively desired; for you see, Wesendonck had been very attentive to Janet during the meal, and the girl had seemed more shy and gentle under his attentions than was her wont.

Cecil effaced himself immediately after dinner. He said he had planned to attend Vespers at St. John the Divine, a church sufficiently far removed to necessitate his immediate departure. As Guido learned subsequently from Janet, Cecil, whenever Wesendonck was in evidence on a Sunday, was seized with an unquenchable desire to attend four-o'clock service at the Cathedral. The racial antipathy between these two was strong; the dashing, brilliant, quick-witted German, whose national and individual ego were developed almost to the point of blatancy; the substantial, reticent, slow-tongued, high-bred English boy to whom self-emphasis was the most insufferable of social sins.

Cecil having expunged himself, Janet gave Guido a killing look, which said as plainly as words:

"You may look for the performance to begin."

And a performance it was and begin it did at a deftly turned phrase of Janet's. Wesendonck changed abruptly from an innocuous and pleasing Apollo Belvidere to a business-like and thoroughly efficient disciple of Mars. Niceties of discrimination between conversation and small talk and their application vanished. Henceforth Wesendonck was almost a monologist.

"Why," he exclaimed, "you Americans are being duped by England. Incomprehensible to us, after your experience with her in the past."

"It was a German, not an English king, who lost England her Thirteen Colonies," said Guido, contemptuously, glad of his chance in the ring at last.

"You don't suppose I was referring to the Revolution, do you?" Wesendonck inquired, politely, "or even 1812? Oh, no. I refer to England's part in the Civil War."

Guido bit his inner lip. From the tail-end of his eye

he caught the appreciative smile on the Professor's lips. He had also a strong sense of Janet, intense and watchful near his elbow. Was she wearing his colors or Wesendonck's? His—since he spoke for America and the Allies. Guido gritted his teeth. This German was no mean adversary. Apparently he knew American history as well as Guido did—perhaps he knew it better. Well, it was also possible that Guido knew a little more of German history than Wesendonck might find agreeable. Guido would give the German a run for his money.

"England's part in the Civil War was not as reprehensible as is usually believed," Guido retorted. "Once Lincoln issued the Emancipation Act, England was guilty of no further unfriendly acts."

"Of course—if you choose to believe the English apologists!" Mr. Wesendonck smiled fatuously.

"I believe that that was the true cause of England's change of front in the Civil War," Guido replied pleasantly, "because it is strictly in line with England's inimical attitude toward slavery during the half-century preceding the Civil War. Remember, if you please, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, after England had saved Germany from France's further aggressions, it was England, through the person of Lord Castlereagh, that insisted on the abolition of slavery throughout the countries involved in the peace negotiations."

"Permit me to correct a misstatement," said Mr. Wesendonck, with a civility which would have been servile but for an undertone of arrogance, insinuated Guido knew not how, into his words.

"*Bitte*," said Guido, with the same exaggerated punctilio.

"Not Wellington, but Bluecher, saved Germany from Napoleon. Bluecher also saved England from Napoleon. Wellington, it is true, gave Bluecher a little help of no particular significance. The English, with their habit of braggadocio, pretended that the glory of the day went to English arms. Every German school-boy knows better."

"Apparently," said Guido, "Germany is re-writing history as well as biography to suit her needs. I see that in Leipzig the other day Shakespeare was formally adopted by your compatriots."

"And very properly so," Wesendonck flung back. "Eng-

gland never appreciated Shakespeare. If it were not for Germany's efforts Shakespeare would have been forgotten long ago in England. It is only envy of the magnificent German Shakespearian productions that make second-rate English actors like Irving and Beerbohm Tree attempt Shakespearian roles. It is a noteworthy fact that England, during the last century, has not produced a single Shakespearian actor of the first water, like Possart or Sonnenthal. Shakespeare, if he were alive to-day, and if it were possible to chose one's own nationality, would self-evidently have elected to be a German. The English, eaten up with envy of Germany's general superiority, cannot see this, cannot, of course, be expected to see it, since magnanimity is a dead letter in Britain. But Germans, who understand Shakespeare so well, so much better than any mere superficial Englishman is capable of understanding him, comprehend this perfectly. That is why we were right in formally adopting the great poet as a German. He himself would have wished it. It was our way of showing him respect, of indicating that we hold no grudge against him because he happens to have been born on English soil. It was the highest honor with which we could crown him."

Janet, who had literally sat open-mouthed with amazement, at this point, sad to relate, clapped her hands over her mouth and giggled. Neither of her parents rebuked her with as much as a look, but Wesendonck, of the perfect manner and manners, looked astonished and grieved.

Guido came to the rescue.

"Janet," he said, not without a glimmer of sardonic humor, "apparently thinks that Beerbohm-Tree was a German, too. '*Birnbaum*'—you know."

"Oh, no," said Wesendonck, his aggressiveness restored by this happy explanation of the giggle which had disconcerted him. "Oh, no! Tree is a very indifferent actor. If he had one drop of German blood in his veins, he would do very much better."

Janet giggled again. Professor Geddes said hastily:

"How about Forbes-Robertson? His Hamlet, you know——"

"Forbes-Robertson? I have never heard of him," Wesendonck replied in a tone which said as plainly as words that

any actor unknown to Casimir Wesendonck was an actor unworthy of the name.

"Then—there are some American actors—English-speaking if not English—who should be mentioned," Professor Geddes continued. "We are rather fond of Sothorn and Marlowe, you know. And of Booth we were proud."

"My dear sir!" Wesendonck's tone was confidential. "As an educated man you cannot expect a German to take any American actor, any American novel or play or so-called work of art seriously."

Again a ripple of half-smothered hilarity burst from Janet, and Mrs. Geddes said:

"Child, whatever started you coughing like that? Find yourself a coughdrop." And Janet bolted from the room.

Guido was not smiling. Nor was Professor Geddes. And neither was angry or indignant. Both were telling themselves that there was being offered for their inspection a most interesting psychological study. Was Wesendonck mad? Was he a fair exemplar of German thought and opinion and conviction? Guido did not believe it. Such pachydermic obtuseness surely could be found in isolated instances only, and happy chance had thrown that isolated instance his way. Bad as the Germans were, surely, they were not entirely mad.

"You spoke of Bluecher's saving England," Guido said, reverting to the earlier theme. "I think Germany, rather than England, was endangered by Napoleon."

"It was Napoleon who said that Antwerp, in the possession of a strong armed force, was a pistol pointed at the heart of England."

Was there malevolence or merely allusiveness in the reply? Only a few days since Antwerp had fallen into the hands of the Germans. Guido, coming up the subway stairs at Times Square, had seen the headline of the *Courier des Etats-Unis* staring him in the face: "*Antvers est tombé ce matin!*" And for some reason that headline, telling in French of a great city's fall had impressed him as no English or German or Russian headline had ever impressed him. It had made him feel queer and sick. There are spiritual experiences in every life which defy analysis. Guido could formulate no explanation for this one.

Answering Wesendonck, he said, quietly:

"The pistol is now in German hands."

"Yes, and let England beware, let her beware!" Wesendonck cried. "She has held us down long enough. This is the German War of Independence. Ah, we will make England suffer for her perfidy in the past."

"But what in heaven's name has England done?"

"Surely you are merely feigning ignorance of her unbelievable greed and hypocrisy."

"No, I am not," Guido said bluntly. "I am asking for information and I would appreciate getting it. I would, really. You pro-Germans always generalize and never come down to hard facts."

Wesendonck stared at Guido in amazement which very evidently was entirely unfeigned.

"Why," he said, "the history of England is a history of robbery and piracy. Great Britain is the robber nation, the hypocrite, the arch-liar, the prince of oppressors."

"Generalization," said Guido, contemptuously. "I asked for facts."

"Facts! Like Gradgrind. I see. I refer you to any text-book on English history. Witness all her colonies, the theft of Gibraltar, her Indian Empire, her outraging of the Boer Republics. Perfidious Albion has much to answer for. She shall suffer yet."

"As far as I can judge," Guido remarked, calmly, "it's envy that is biting you."

"Envy? Say rather moral indignation, a profound conviction that we, the Germans, the most ethical, religious, cultured and moral people on earth have been chosen by Providence to chasten the unspeakable Gorgon-headed, Octopus-tentacled monster which is called the British Empire."

Guido thought:

"This is sheer lunacy."

He said:

"And how do you propose to chasten this monster? By throwing bombs from your Zeppelins upon insignificant civilians in England—as you did a week ago at Bethune?"

The contempt and irony in Guido's voice escaped Wesendonck. He cried in a voice of triumphant exultation:

"That miserable little affair was just a prelude, just an earnest and a promise of what is to come. Just watch

and see what is going to happen to London in a very short time. We have a large fleet of Zeppelins and one fine night all London will go up in a blaze of glory. We have other little surprises up our sleeve. Shall I play the prophet and foretell some of the events of the coming season? By Thanksgiving we will be in Paris. By Christmas we will be in command of Calais and Dunkirk. New Year's Eve we will celebrate in London—or rather in what is left of London after our Zeps and our big Berthas have finished with it."

Grossvater Geddes, who had given his undivided attention to the discussion, spoke for the first time.

"Herr Wesendonck," he said, "when the Germans wrought such cruel havoc in Belgium, they explained it on the ground of military necessity. This projected onslaught upon England cannot be thus explained. Why, then?"

Wesendonck seemed greatly astonished by this question.

"I thought I had made that plain," he said. "To punish England, of course. She has not been invaded since the days of William the Conqueror. Through suffering she will be chastened for past misdeeds, for the atrocious tricks she employed in starting this terrible war, for that crowning act of barbarism of which she was guilty when she forced into the world conflict all the savage races under her own and France's dominion—the Gurkhas, the Turcos, the native Indian regiments."

"Why," Guido cried, "when the War started you Germans foretold that all England's 'oppressed races' would rise against her as a man! You posed as their liberator! You did not call them savages then."

Wesendonck went livid with rage.

"England is making them fight for her," he almost shouted. "She is making them!"

"That is what some folks think of Germany—that the German soldiers are being forced to fight."

Wesendonck appeared to think this vastly amusing.

"Yes," Guido assented, "I agree with you. So does Professor Geddes. We realize no people can be made to fight as the Germans are fighting if they do not want to fight. The same belief, however, applies to other races and other nationalities, Turcos and Hindus included. It is your rage at having failed to bring about uprisings through-

out the British Empire that is now making you shout yourselves hoarse with indignation over England's 'latest perfidy.'"

For a moment Wesendonck threatened literally to explode. The danger of self-annihilation by spontaneous combustion passed. He said:

"It is not our fault if all those oppressed races failed to take advantage of their golden opportunity. At any rate, England will be made to suffer for her *Rassenverrat!*" He fairly hissed the last word.

"*Rassenverrat!*" Guido repeated, thoughtfully. It seemed to him that that one word was the equivalent of a volume of commentaries on the Teutonic attitude toward everything and everybody not German, and on their sincere conviction, stupendously asinine though it was, that the Germans were a specially endowed and generally superior race.

"At any rate," Wesendonck continued, "all this talk on England's part of going into the war to save Belgium is buncombe. England is fighting for England. Or rather, England is letting others fight for England. Ah! England is clever. England is wily. But by New Year's Eve we Germans will have brought her to her knees—and then you shall see what you shall see."

"I'm almost sorry," said Guido, "that we did not declare war the moment Belgium was invaded, as of course we might have done. You could not possibly have laid all the abominations at our door which you charge against England."

"Oh," said Wesendonck easily, "America will not go into the War. She is making money far too abundantly in the ammunition traffic. And she will make more still unless we stop her."

"Unless you stop us!" Guido caught his breath. "May I inquire," he asked, "why so patriotic a German as yourself remains in neutral America instead of rushing to the defense of the Fatherland?"

"My dear fellow! I'm an American citizen. I came here immediately after having served my year in the Army as *Freiwilliger*."

A queer sound escaped the Professor's throat. His eyes were cold and hard as he asked:

"I would be interested to learn how your tender Teutonic conscience reconciles your American citizenship with these strictures on America."

"My dear sir!" Wesendonck seemed genuinely surprised. "America is not in the least concerned in this War! The conflict is primarily between Germany and England. The War is none of America's business. Why is she interfering?"

Guido breathed audibly with anger. His hatred for this glittering, handsome man was no longer of the drawing-room variety. He now would cheerfully have made a vulgarian of himself by using upon Wesendonck bayonet or hand grenade. He understood what it means to be "fighting mad."

Quoth Professor Geddes:

"In the first place, my dear Wesendonck, the conflict is not primarily between Germany and England. It is between Germany and the entire world. This suspicion has come to me before and I have beaten it back as savoring of hysteria. But you have settled the point for me beyond peradventure of a doubt. And now I will tell you the real reason why Germans rail at England the way they do. While Sir Edward Grey was still making superhuman efforts to stay the mad impulse of the Continental Powers toward war, he was approached by the Imperial German government with the request to make a promise that Great Britain would not go into the war, *even if France were attacked!* The perfidy which Germany charges against England was committed by herself. The object of the Triple Alliance was precisely to guard against an uncalled-for attack by Germany. Naturally, as England's statesmen are not imbeciles, they recognize the strategic importance, and the importance in the Balance of Power, of Belgium and of an intact France. That does not minimize England's decency in scornfully rejecting Germany's overtures. She might, you know, have rejected them, lulled Germany to false security, allowed France to grapple single-handedly with her treacherous neighbor while she prepared for eventual war. *For England was unprepared!* And that one fact alone, compared with the marvelous perfection of Germany's preparedness, vindicates England's honor and hopelessly damns Germany."

Professor Geddes had spoken with an incisive vigor and earnestness, but Wesendonck was silenced for a moment only. Then he calmly retorted:

"Professor Geddes, you are misinformed! The trouble is that you Americans believe all these English lies, instead of trusting Germany, who would have been your staunch friend in the future if you had treated her decently now!"

For a moment this reply, with all it implied, left even Professor Geddes speechless. Then he resumed, completely ignoring the retort, which in itself was indicative of the clandestine hopes and aspirations of Germany and the Germans.

"You say this war does not concern America," the Professor said. "As America is embraced in the world, it does concern America. Even if America were geographically situated outside the earth, she would, if accessible to the earth, be very much concerned in this conflict. That is so because America is the ideal exponent of humanness. In her all races mingle and blend and live side by side. The very pith of marrow of our being—for upon it depends not only our welfare but the possibility to exist at all—is absence of race prejudice, while Germany is the most extraordinary exponent of the glorification of race prejudice which the world has ever been harrowed with."

"America and absence of race prejudice," Wesendonck sneered. "Why, then, do you burn your negroes at the stake?"

"Those are sectional outbursts, not even sectional, communal within sectional, I should say. The entire country condemns and deplores these outbursts. In Germany the entire nation seems to uphold and glory in race prejudice and to think it a very fine virtue.

"This thing which you have done," Professor Geddes continued with gathering heat, "is so monstrous that we in America with our spiritual ideals——"

Wesendonck interrupted him with a burst of laughter.

"Do please forgive me, *Herr Professor*," he said, "but, really, I see now that you are joking. America and spiritual ideals! Spiritual ideals in the land of the dollar-chasers! Spiritual ideals! You want me to make the obvious retort, do you not? Spiritual ideals are not possible to a nation without a culture of its own. And you

have no indigenous culture. You'll admit that. You plead your youth in extenuation. Wasn't it Oscar Wilde who said that America's youth is her oldest tradition? What little culture you possess is English—therefore steeped in cant and hypocrisy. Just wait till we drink our *Neu-Jahrs-Bowle* in London—after that—England's downfall achieved, German culture will dominate the world. And it will penetrate as far as America. Then, the United States will become steeped in a culture that is culture. For your silly Indian traditions, which really do not concern a white race at all, you will substitute those beautiful old legends which cluster about the ancient German mythology, the legends of Thor and Frigga, the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Gudrunsage*. Then will your poets have better material to work with than now. Yes, yes, Professor Geddes, let all men and women of German origin rejoice. Within ten years German will be taught in the Public Schools of America in place of English. Our splendid, memory-aiding, logical, sensible German tongue will supplant the irrational, illogical, barbarous English tongue."

On and on he raved. There was no stopping him. Like the wheels of Juggernaut he rushed on. Neither Professor Geddes nor Guido made any further attempt to gainsay or to argue with him. Finally, a little after four o'clock, he remembered that he had a supper engagement, and having made sweeping bows, and sent his excuses to the ladies—Mrs. Geddes had made her escape from the room early in the afternoon—he hurried away.

Grossvater Geddes began walking the floor, his hands on his back.

"Nun, Eduard," he said presently, addressing his son, "show me two more German chauvinists like Wesendonck, and I'll be as rabidly anti-German as any of you."

With his head bowed upon his breast the old man walked from the room.

Guido also was cerebrating. This, then, was the real, orthodox German, the German of pure, unadulterated, uncontaminated breed. The difference between this product of modern Germany and German-American boys like Otto, or Henry, struck Guido as glaring and strange. There was, on the part of German-Americans, a harking back to origins, a yearning for racial affiliation, a sort of honest,

childlike faith that your own racial kith and kin could not do anything really bad and that the other fellow, whoever he might be, must be the real villain. Their hatred for England, even, was based on an honest belief that England was all that the German newspapers, and speakers, and preachers, and magazines represented her to be. German-Americans were notoriously docile and amenable to authority, and they were as potters' clay in the hands of their crafty and shrewd brethren from over the sea. In the simon-pure, "made-in-Germany" human article there was a vein of malevolence, of evil satisfaction in the ability to cause suffering, which the German-American lacked. The average German-American was a kindly creature, swift and efficient in the alleviation of pain and painstakingly observing the decencies of life. Guido now saw in the German-American a sublimated dupe of the German. He thought that he had stumbled upon a wonderful discovery and hugged it close. It enabled him to transfer all his anger from the one to the other. He even felt a boundless compassion for the German-Americans who allowed themselves to be inoculated with the crass stupidity, the sublime conceit, the obtuse tactlessness, the overweening racial arrogance of his transatlantic brother. As a result of this cogitation Guido felt inclined to be more kindly disposed toward his former school-mates than he had been since the War started. For his great discovery let them out so beautifully.

"It's an obsession," Professor Geddes remarked, presently, "it's an obsession. You cannot argue with a locomotive running wild. You have got to stop it, that's all. God pity bleeding Europe."

As Guido was leaving, he met Cecil at the door. Cecil had just signed for a telegram and was reading it.

"I'll walk to the corner with you, Guy," he said, thrusting the telegram into his pocket. "Is that fellow gone?"

"Yes."

"I'm glad I went to Vespers at the Cathedral. They had a minister from Brooklyn, a very fine fellow with strong socialistic tendencies. I do not approve of socialism at all. In fact, I disapprove. But this chap was just a humanitarian—the brotherhood idea had gotten hold of him—I could see that. But what struck me hard was

this. I cannot imagine an Episcopalian minister in England with socialistic tendencies preaching from a pulpit of the Established Church. In fact, I cannot very well imagine an Episcopalian minister being a socialist. Here, in America, in your greatest and most authoritative Protestant cathedral, the thing is done. And it was done soberly, decently. The fellow was a sort of Fabian, a parlor socialist. I was more impressed than I can say. Tolerance, forbearance, freedom to have your views and to air your views—that's America. That's what's making America so great. You people aren't afraid of anything. You're not afraid of socialism, Christian Science, Methodist Revivals, Catholic missions, Billy Sundays, prize-fights. The melting pot is big enough for it all, and you are quite incredibly certain that nothing but pure metal is going to be smelted out of the miscellaneous ore that is dumped in. I've decided, Guido, to become an American citizen when I'm of age. Thought you'd like to know. If I live."

"If you live?" Guido demanded, struck by a new note in Cecil's voice.

"Yes, I'm leaving for home to-morrow morning. I'm going to enlist in a Canadian regiment."

✓ "Cecil! You're not old enough."

"I'm a year older than you and I'm ten years more fit for war. I'm wiry—men of the Bantam class usually are."

"But why—if you intend becoming an American citizen—why do you want to enlist now—for England?"

"I've thrashed the thing out thoroughly. You first of all have something to do with it. When you took that long tramp up in the mountains and were laid up afterwards for twenty-four hours, the reason you gave me for doing it was that while you knew it would hurt you to do it you knew also that it would hurt you not to go. Something like that. Well, your grit put grit into me. For one thing I want to know what it's like."

"Cecil!"

"Then—there's Belgium. One can't get away from Belgium. It's all about one—it's unavoidable, it's everywhere. So, for another thing, I'm going over there to escape Belgium. And then, last of all, principally, perhaps, it's because England has been slandered so basely, so maliciously. That

fellow—to-day—he did his bit, I warrant, at maligning Britain.”

“Yes, and America, too.”

“Naturally. I tell you, I’ve got to get back at them for that—for all those foul slanders.”

“How will your aunt take it?”

“Aunty is a brick. I wrote her for her permission. She wired me in reply. Read for yourself.”

Guido unfolded the telegram which Cecil handed him, and read:

“Your parents would be proud of you and so am I.”

Guido handed the telegram back to Cecil. Then he said:

“Cecil, it’s bully fine of you. It makes me more ashamed than ever.”

“Why? They wouldn’t take you at any rate, you’re underweight, too frail. And it’s not America’s quarrel—yet. In a few years perhaps. There is nothing to be ashamed of.

“I know you are thinking that it’s easy enough for me to say that,” Cecil continued, “and I know I’d feel as you do in your place. It’s the sense of race operating in you. I told you we could never get wholly away from race, didn’t I? But then—it’s easy enough to swim with the stream, but you’re swimming against it, and that’s fine, that’s splendid. And then, Guy, though the Germans have gone stark, raving, tearing mad at present, they are a very great race. Never doubt that. Be ashamed of their present lunacy—it’s a sort of moral insanity, you know—but don’t be ashamed of them. They are a very great race in spite of it all. My father was quite a German scholar and never tired of expatiating on German greatness. He was as fond of Goethe as of Shakespeare. I can repeat some of his favorite quotations now, without knowing their meaning:

*“Ich bin ein Teil von jener Kraft,
Das stets das Böse will, and stets das Gute schafft.”*

Guido was struck by the appositeness of the quotation.

“How odd,” he said, “that you should have quoted just that,” he said.

"What does it mean?" Cecil inquired.
Guido, after thinking a moment, translated:

"I am a part of yon dread power,
Which, seeking evil, good brings as its dower."

"Perhaps," Guido concluded, "Germany's seeking of evil will nevertheless accomplish good. What do you say? Is it possible?"

Cecil did not reply at once. After a pause, he said, abruptly:

"I think, Guy, your premise is incorrect. Germany is not seeking to do an evil thing—not, according to her lights. She is acting up to her standards. To us they seem detestable. To her they seem right and just. Of course we are not yet quite clear as to why she has precipitated this war, but say she did it because she thought that England's *Weltherrschaft* had lasted too long, because she thought that England was entirely inadequate and incompetent and much too futile for the part for which she had been cast on the world's stage. If Germany sincerely believes all this and thought that, what with her old age pensions and workingmen's sick benefits and compulsory military training and unrepresentative government she could do better for herself and the world at large than England, she had a perfect right to make a dab at ousting England and stepping into her shoes. But she had no right to slander England as she has done and as she is doing, and to try to ascribe to England the identical designs upon herself which she had upon Britain. That's abominable. And she is going to suffer for it."

Guido had listened to Cecil with growing astonishment.

"Then you do not quarrel with Germany because of all this talk about her Hour of Destiny?"

"No, why should I?" Cecil responded. "I believe in Britain's destiny. And in America's. Why shouldn't the Germans believe in Germany's destiny? If German culture is really as superior to English culture as Germans claim, why, then Germany deserves to win out. It's a case of proving who is the better man. But Germany will not win out. This web of falsehood and malignancy and cant, this vitriolic hatred, this slandering of England, this pent-up,

viperish, tigerish exasperation speak plainly of envy—envy of England's greatness and power, envy of her methods, her mental endowments, her prowess in the past. And a nation that is envious to such a degree lacks the final elements of greatness—poise and judgment."

"In a German magazine article which I read recently," Guido responded thoughtfully, "the writer compared Britain to an old-established, aristocratic firm which, secure in the permanence of its clientage, does business in a happy-go-lucky way, lacking initiative and innovation, sedulously celebrating holidays and half-holidays, with week-ends in summer and Christmas and Easter vacations thrown in for good measure. Germany, on the other hand, was compared to a frugal, alert, business-like new firm, anxious to please, willing to work overtime and possessing business imagination and tact. The writer cited the case of an English manufacturer of pocket-knives who refused to make a change in the style of handle desired by the South American trade. The salesman of a German house on his own responsibility promised to have his firm make the sort of handle that was wanted and secured the order."

"Yes," said Cecil bitterly, "and he might have added that in order to secure the order, a small town in Germany was renamed Sheffield so that the South American customer believed he was purchasing English steel when, in truth, as he later discovered to his sorrow, he had secured the style of handle he desired at the cost of very inferior blades."

"Really?" Guido demanded. "Are you sure? It sounds—well, it sounds, you know, like the sort of trick of which Germans are continually accusing Americans"

Cecil became quite excited.

"You've stumbled upon an odd twist in the German character," he said. "They are forever accusing others of the very things they are doing themselves. Part of their policy of putting the other fellow on the defensive, I suppose.

"As for the comparison drawn between the business men of Germany and England," Cecil continued, "why is it that America bars Chinese and Japanese labor? White men want to enjoy leisure time and the fruits of Occidental civilization. The Chinaman lives on rice boiled in salt water and labors eighteen hours a day. The Polish Jews

are objected to by some people on the same score. They live on fried onions and are satisfied to slave for a pittance twelve and fifteen hours a day. Does an American want to do that? Or an Englishman? If incessant work is part of the German concept of the scheme of things, it's worth fighting to save the world from becoming a place in which the scramble for a livelihood would be intensified a hundred times. The world wants more leisure, not less."

"If you believe in England's destiny, why do you want to become an American citizen?" Guido asked with the irrelevance and directness which characterized the talk of these two young men.

"I'm going to answer you candidly, and I hope you will not resent my frankness," Cecil replied. "I believe in England's destiny and I also believe in America's destiny. I believe that the destiny of these two great peoples is irrevocably bound up together. America, in a way, is a continuation or rather an extension, of Britain. You've developed along different lines. On the whole I think they are better than Britain's. You have a largeness of view—really, you cannot, you simply cannot imagine how your outlook upon life in general strikes the European. Then, too, you are so beautifully unhampered by tradition."

Both boys fell silent. After a little while Cecil said:

"There is another curious twist in the German character. You'll never catch them dwelling on England's real misdemeanors. Germany helped partition Poland, she wrested Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark and divided the spoils with Austria, then fought Austria because she wanted to hog it all; then she picked a quarrel with France and helped herself to Alsace-Lorraine. And yet she has the face to howl continually about England's 'aggrandizements'—Gibraltar, which came to us in the course of an honorable war, and India, which, Heaven knows, we have done our best to civilize, and the Boer Republic—now you know, we were right in the matter of the Boer War."

Guido nodded assent, and Cecil continued:

"But there are a few items in English history which the average right-minded Briton would rather not be reminded of."

"Ireland?"

"No, I wasn't thinking of Ireland. I would rather not discuss Ireland. Superficially England is wrong in the Irish question, but I'm not certain that we are not right intrinsically. The problem of Ireland is tremendous. What I meant was forcing the opium trade on China. To my mind that was England's blackest crime. But I've never heard a German complain about that. You see, it did not interfere with the growth of the German Empire.

"But I have not yet told you," Cecil continued, "just why I intend to transpose myself from a British subject to an American citizen. It's because I think you in the States need all the Anglo-Saxon blood you can get to offset the influx of other nationalities. The English were the earliest American settlers, and the original settlers of the Thirteen Colonies and their descendants have impressed most of their essentials upon later settlers. But the breed is now in jeopardy. It is in danger of being absorbed and dissipated by the tremendous tide of emigration with which you are deluged year after year. The Germans boast of their strength in the United States. If they continue to increase in the same arithmetical progression throughout another half-century, remaining as staunchly true to the interests of the Fatherland then as now, what will happen to America? The entire complexion of American civilization will be changed. I believe that in serving America I am serving England, in serving England I am serving America. I believe in the joint political destiny of the Anglo-Saxon countries. Paraphrasing Benjamin Franklin, I would like to say that unless England and America hang together, they will surely hang singly. No one has yet fathomed the entire significance of the conflict in Europe."

Guido was struck by the parallel line of thought evinced by Cecil's forecast and by Wesendonck's prophecy that within ten years after England's downfall German would have usurped the place of English in the American public schools. Wesendonck's words had seemed to Guido the miasmatic phantasmagoria of a war-excited brain. But Cecil was anything but war-excited. He was as little stirred by the thought of going off to war as if war were part of the daily routine mapped out for him for the coming year. Guido said:

✓ "Needless to say, I prefer English influence to German, but you will forgive my candor, Cecil, if I say that my idea is that all races which meet here must contribute equally to our national life. In no other way can our ultimate destiny be accomplished."

"It is a point on which we will never agree," Cecil rejoined. "You persist in confounding race prejudice and race consciousness. We in England are conscious of race, but we show less race prejudice than you do. The average American citizen on meeting a negro at a dinner given by a friend, would betray some sign of surprise or amazement or disapprobation. The average Englishman would accept the situation, although unusual, as entirely meet and proper."

I believe in the joint, co-equal influence of all races," said Guido, doggedly, yet feeling that perhaps he did not understand his own position, and all he was committing himself to, any more than he understood Cecil's. He was thankful that Cecil did not pursue the issue.

The two friends parted a little later. Guido was greatly moved. Cecil showed his usual toplofty composure. Guido watched Cecil stalk away, hands in pockets, and whistling gayly. Guido did not guess the emotion hidden under that seeming indifference.

A block further down Guido encountered Otto, who invited him home for supper.

"We'll have the house all to ourselves," said Otto, but this inducement was no inducement to Guido, for "having the house to ourselves" signified that Otto would be able to bellow out his pro-German sentiment as lustily as he pleased without fear of disturbing the Sunday evening game of whist which Otto's married sister and her husband played every week with his parents.

"No, thank you," said Guido, "not to-night." And he told Otto that he had just left Cecil, and that Cecil was off for the war.

"A fine fellow, Cecil," said Otto, heartily. "It's splendid of him to go even if he does fight on the wrong side. But, of course, everybody sticks to their own."

To Guido, whose thoughts were always spinning along the grooves of Right above Race and No Race Prejudice, this argument sounded hollow and false. And yet he per-

ceived the analogy of thought which existed between Otto's terse, off-hand way of putting the thing, and Cecil's elaborate, more carefully wrought out plea for race.

He was still smarting from his long session with Wesendonck and he had no desire to turn on the sluice of vituperation which was inevitable to a discussion of the war by Otto. So he vented his irritation by saying:

"It's a wonder you like Cecil, seeing he is English."

"Oh," said Otto, "Cecil is so fine he ought to have been a German."

Guido stared but made no comment.

"It's natural that Cecil believes all those English lies," Otto continued, "but I don't see how you, a German, can take any stock in them."

"You are forever talking about 'English lies,'" Guido rejoined. "What do you mean by that phrase? It is the Germans who are doing all the arguing and explaining and palavering about fine motives. England's attitude is as plain as plain can be."

"When you talk like that," said Otto, "I can no longer regard you as a dupe of the English. I must look upon you as practicing connivance in their lies."

"Take care," said Guido, "you are going too far."

"Well," said Otto, "I can believe anything of a chap who turns traitor to his race."

A sensation as of physical nausea swept over Guido. His gorge rose. Without a word he turned and walked rapidly away. A little further on he thought that he should have showed his resentment in a different, more forceful way. The more he thought about it, the more vexed he became, not only with Otto and Wesendonck and all German sympathizers, but with himself. To be vexed with ourselves is the most cruelly bitter of all vexations. His wrath waxed, throve and grew. By the time he reached home he was in a gale of fury. There was murder in his heart.

Through the window, as he stopped to pull out his latch-key, he saw that which fanned his fury into a final stage of stark blackness. Frau Ursula and Hauser were seated at the supper-table. His mother's hand lay in his father's. She was speaking, and upon her lips was a smile of rare tenderness. Presently his father lifted his mother's hand

to his lips and kissed it. It was a simple and homely and innocent enough scene as passing between husband and wife, but to Guido it was the ultimate drop that made his cup of bitterness overflow. He had, on returning from Waldheim, perceived the difference in the atmosphere of his home. Formerly, at best, the relations between the master of the house and his wife had approximated an amicable truce. Now mutual affection, confidence, esteem prevailed. To find oneself, without any fault of one's own, suddenly deposed from the lofty pinnacle of being all in all to another person, and to see someone else enthroned in one's place, and that someone else one's ancient enemy, is enough, surely, to curdle the milk of human kindness of even an earthly saint. And Guido was no saint. Not by any means. His detestation of the man he called father and believed to be his father assumed a new virulence and was suppressed only because his father's new manner toward himself made overt hostility a well-nigh impossible breach of the decencies.

Guido found his latchkey and let himself in as silently as he might. He tiptoed across the hall, past the half-open door, intending to go to his own room until his rage had spent itself. He was by this time in one of those blind, insensate, desperate rages which cannot be controlled or checked but must, like a tornado, blast and blight and run their destructive course.

He felt vaguely that to meet his father at this moment was to invite disaster. Unfortunately Frau Ursula heard Guido and called to him to come in for supper. Guido thanked her, standing on the threshold of the dining-room door, saying he desired no supper: Then Hauser called to him and urged him to come and eat. Hauser was in his usual Sunday evening mood. The contentment which comes with rest, and good food, and happiness in love lapped him about, and the conglomerate, bovine satisfaction which he exuded rasped Guido's nerves like a file. He thanked Hauser and said he would go to his room. He was not hungry.

What? Not hungry? At Guido's age, Hauser could have eaten a five-course dinner every two hours. As to doing without supper because he had had a heavy dinner was absurd. "And you need not fear for your figure.

"You'll be slender at forty. Your mother has saved some delicious cold chicken for you, so you'd better change your mind."

Hauser had risen and had retreated to the open fireplace, where he lit a cigar with every symptom of succulent comfort. Guido's wrath and disgust wrenched him agonizingly. He was angry with his mother, too. He almost hated her for having called to him, for allowing his father's caress, for saving him dainty slices of cold chicken and expecting him to eat them. Into such excesses of emotion does hatred betray the best of us. Guido forgot his own virtuous strictures on the hate-inspired, hate-beset, hate-nurtured Germans; forgot his own classically calm judgment that hatred carried to an extreme, is obscene.

He contrived to say with ordinary civility:

"Thanks, I really want nothing to eat."

Frau Ursula would have let him go—she saw unmistakable danger signs in his eyes. Twice or thrice only had she seen her boy in a black rage. She did not desire to see him plunged into fury now, least of all before her husband. But Hauser obtusely persisted. He enlarged upon the merits of his wife's supper. Praised her genius as a cook and at planning a meal, paid her clumsily jocular compliments. It was evident that he was pitting his powers to please against the boy's sullenness, which was fast coming to a head. Frau Ursula nervously clasped and unclasped her hands.

"I do not want anything to eat," Guido repeated for the dozenth time. "I could not eat anything, if I wanted to. I'm sick and disgusted. I'm sick and disgusted with the pro-Germans. I've tried to think of them as fools. But they are not fools. They are knaves—all of them."

He glanced challengingly at Hauser. He no longer desired to avoid an altercation. On the contrary, he now ardently desired a quarrel, was willing to court it, to go out of his way to meet it or provoke it.

Hauser said, good-naturedly:

"Well, I'm a pro-German and I am neither a fool nor a knave. So I think you will have to amend your opinion to embrace my case."

"I'll not amend it," said Guido, sharply. "I mean what

I said." This, of course, was rank insolence. Hauser flushed angrily, and his wife said, speaking quickly:

"Guido, you had better go to your room."

"That's what I wanted to do when I came in," Guido flung back, grumblingly. "Why wasn't I allowed to do so then?"

"Don't speak to your mother like that," said Hauser, in a tone of authority.

Guido did not answer in intelligible words, but continued to grumble, and Hauser said, less harshly—for to hear his wife rebuke her beloved Guido had been balsam to him as it been wormwood to the boy:

"Learn to respect the opinions of others, my boy, even when you do not share them."

"I respect the opinions of honest men," said Guido, "but the Germans are no longer honest men, they are liars and robbers and murderers. And those who sympathize with them are quite as bad."

"Guido!" Frau Ursula exclaimed in a tone of shocked amazement. What had come over the boy?

Hauser, still good-naturedly, said:

"I think, Guido, we will not discuss the war just now."

"If I feel like discussing the war, I'll discuss it," said Guido. "And I'll say what I please. I'm ashamed of my German blood and of my German name."

In an instant all Hauser's beautiful self-control went to pieces. In an instant, too, he was on his feet, very near the boy, confronting him angrily, with purpling face. Thus the two stood staring at each other, truculently, cruelly, brutally.

Frau Ursula's heart almost ceased to beat with horror. What was going to happen? She could see that all the latent, pent-up animosity of years vibrated between them, strengthened and buttressed by the compound interest which it had drawn but had not expended during the decade of its dormancy.

The unexpected happened. Hauser said heavily, angrily:

"I'm glad to be able to relieve you of part of the shame you feel by relieving you of your German name. My name is not yours. You are not my son. I hope your own name will suit you better."

The room went black before Frau Ursula's eyes.

The shock was almost as great for Guido as for herself. He stared stupidly at Hauser—stupidly and helplessly.

"What did you say?" he demanded.

"You heard me. You did not misunderstand me. You are not my son. Better ask your mother to tell you your real name."

Hauser spoke quietly. His anger seemed to have collapsed. Frau Ursula could see that now he was frightened, not angry.

"But what does it mean?" Guido stammered. "What in heaven's name——"

Hauser, as white now as Guido, perked his thumb in his wife's direction, and called back, as he left the room:

"Your mother will explain."

Left alone with Guido, Frau Ursula experienced the sense of futility which comes with the drop of the last curtain of a tragedy. She had not had time to readjust herself. Her mind was in a haze. Confused and bewildered, she stared at Guido in a perplexity almost as great as his own.

"*Mutterchen?* What did my father mean?"

Frau Ursula felt a violent desire to laugh. But she did not slide into the emotional relief afforded by hysteria. The habits of a lifetime are not easily broken; but it may be said without exaggeration, that in the few moments which elapsed before she spoke, she had suffered torments so violent as to equal the summation of mental anguish of an average life-time.

She was very angry with Guido. But she was far, far angrier with Hauser. She did not allow herself the luxury of introspective analysis of Hauser's words at this moment. She felt a legion of emotions which she would later dissect. At the moment she must give her undivided attention to the task of telling Guido the truth about his parentage in such a fashion as to retain his love. To lose that—Guido's love—would be the crowning misfortune of all. She had lain awake nights planning, scheming how ultimately to tell him; plotting, in her weaker moments, not to tell him at all. And now, at a most inauspicious moment, she was confronted with the imminent task of revealing to the boy that she was not his mother, for she could not, she dared not, in justice to herself, withhold

that fact from him now. She ground her teeth in impotent rage at Hauser's renewed insinuation. She envisaged the terrible possibility that Guido might despise and abhor her for the deception, humane and benevolent though it had been, which she had practiced in allowing him to believe that she was his mother.

In a low, constrained, pitiful voice she essayed to tell Guido the salient points of the story of his parentage. The boy listened in silence, asking a leading question now and then. Hour after hour slipped by while Frau Ursula, after first telling him the bare outline, embroidered the story with all the pre-natal theorizing which had surrounded his birth and which was to eventualize in the achievement—on his part—of the Political Synthesis that was to bring happiness and freedom to all the world and to all the peoples thereof. She dwelt briefly on his mother's pre-marital career. She observed an almost exaggerated kindness and chivalry in her recital of those—to her—dark chapters of Varvara Alexandrovna's life. She saw him flush painfully as she reluctantly narrated those episodes of his mother's life which had earned her the sorry distinction of solitary confinement. He remembered Dobronov's slides showing the fortress at Schlussemburg and went into a glow of shame. Frau Ursula's compassion for her boy drove from her heart all resentment against him for his share in the catastrophe which was engulfing herself.

When she had at last finished her story, Guido exclaimed, passionately:

"I will never think of that Russian woman as my mother—never. You—you are my own, my true, my real mother." And he flung himself at her feet.

The emotional triumph of the moment compensated her for what she had suffered in the past for the lad's sake and for what, for his sake, she would suffer in the future. So she told herself. So she believed. So, partly and transiently, was true. For her past suffering she had already been compensated in part by her recent happiness. But to liquidate future suffering anticipatorily with present joy is a dubious enterprise, since none can judge of pain that is to come by pain that is past. All emotional experiences are in a state of constant flux. Pain and

pleasure resist every effort to balance them as credits and debits on the ledger of life. As Frau Ursula was to discover

Guido, for the nonce, seemed to have no thought excepting to repeat over and over again the same passionate affirmation that to Frau Ursula, and to no one else, accrued the sacred title of "Mother." What had that other woman, that Russian woman, done to earn it? Nothing. He would never render the name to her. To do so would be tantamount to stealing a hallowed, highly-prized treasure from Frau Ursula, would be the equivalent to stealing from himself a possession as pure and sweet as any talisman. The poor lad spoke wildly. Tears choked his voice. What he said was hardly understandable; he babbled unintelligently now of this and now of that. Love for Frau Ursula, scorn and contempt for the Russian woman who had had the heart to desert her babe for a political cause, was the burden of his strange medley of words.

"No, dear Guido, not that, not that," said Frau Ursula, gently. "I must have told my story very badly indeed if you received that impression."

"I received the only impression possible," cried Guido, "although you tried in every way to disguise the disgraceful truth! You were more than lenient in your telling of wicked and unlovely actions. But all the clemency in the world cannot make black white, all the benevolence in the world cannot wipe away the wrong-doing which it condones. You are too good, too pure, too noble, to have any real sympathy for assassins."

"Hush, hush, my dear, dear boy, you must not call her that. After all she is your mother. And she is suffering cruelly for what wrong she may have done."

But the boy again vehemently denied the right of Varvara Alexandrovna to be called by that name. In the swift rush of wild emotions that were sweeping through him, the agonizing blow to his pride, his disgust and shame and horror at being thus mothered, his contempt for the methods employed by the "Russian woman," and his almost violent outpouring of love and admiration for Frau Ursula, he seemed at moments like one demented.

Suddenly he fell upon his knees and buried his face in her lap, as if he had been a small child and not a young

man. Frau Ursula put her arms around him, and lifted his face to hers and gathered him to her heart.

"My son," she said, "my beloved son, my more than son."

But Guido could not reply; he was crying bitterly.

CHAPTER VII

IT was long after eleven o'clock when Frau Ursula went to her room. The light was burning in Hauser's apartment and she heard him pacing the floor. Apparently he had waited for her. She had hardly entered her room when he rapped at her door. Most particularly she did not wish to speak to him now; she wished to have time to think before seeing him. She paid no attention to his rapping, but a second, more imperious summons brought the perfunctory "*Herein*" to her lips which gave him permission to enter.

A glance at his face told her that he had spent a miserable evening. But this did not soften her toward him. What he had done, the insinuation which he had revived, was unforgivable.

"Ursula," he cried, "I do not know what you are going to say to me, but whatever you say or think or do, you cannot despise me as heartily as I despise myself."

She raised her eyes to him for a moment, but did not reply. Very composedly, as if he were not present, as if she were quite alone, she began laying away her hat, her scarf, her veil.

"Ursula!"

"Well?"

"I've made you unhappy. If cutting off my hand or my offending tongue could make the thing unsaid, why, it would be made unsaid."

Again Frau Ursula lifted her eyes to her husband's face. The fine irony in her eyes, the incredulous smile—it was barely more than a shadow of a smile subtly tinged with disdain—that hovered about her lips stung him as no words could have done.

"Ursula!"

She did not reply this time, not even with an ejaculatory monosyllable, but sat down at her dressing table and touch-

ing the chain of the electric lamp, busied herself with mending a tiny rent in the lining of her coat.

"Ursula!"

She might have been alone in the room for all the attention she gave him. Her silent contempt frenzied him.

"Ursula, you have never treated me like this before. I deserve it, I know. But I am asking you to forgive me. I am throwing myself on your mercy. What can I say to soften you?" Poor Hauser, with an eloquent gesture of the hands, and with a look so pitiful that it would have softened his wife at any other time, indicated that he was willing to suffer any abasement, or punishment, if only she would take him back into grace. He begged, plead, entreated, implored. He was ready to make any atonement.

But his desperate rhetoric aggravated instead of dissipating his wife's thinly veiled contempt and nourished the anger which she was nursing. For from all he was saying, it was apparent that he was conscious of no offense save only that of telling Guido that he was not his—Hauser's—son. The luckless man by his pleading widened and deepened the chasm which his rash words with their insulting allusion had opened between himself and his wife.

Having exhausted himself in moral prostrations, he lapsed into a frightened silence.

For the third time Frau Ursula raised her eyes to her husband's face. Genuine amazement was mirrored in them. But the silence that was maddening the man remained unbroken.

It has been said that every man's and every woman's virtue has its Achilles' Heel. Individual pride, also, has its vulnerable spot, which, when pricked, reacts with a force entirely out of proportion to the stimulus applied. Frau Ursula had a charitable disposition. She would have forgiven her husband occasional lapses from conjugal fidelity, holding that men are men and must not be judged by the feminine rule of two; she would have forgiven him intemperance, seeing in that manly vice the human variation of tidal wave or earthquake. She would even have stood by him if he had turned defaulter or forger,

since man, being the weaker ethical vessel, is more liable to moral aberration than woman.

Fate is whimsical and sports with human predelictions as with human destiny. The one thing which Frau Ursula deemed unforgivable was the thing Hauser had been guilty in the past, and was guilty of again in the present. She had never entirely forgiven him for his former belief in her pre-marital lapse from virtue, but, being both kindly and wise, she had compromised with her pride in order to embrace happiness. And is not compromise necessary in every marriage? Frau Ursula thought it was. She believed, however, that Hauser had been sincerely convinced of her innocence when he recanted. To have that heretical belief involving herself crop up again after all these years, at a time when mutual confidence and affection were the established order of the day, was a mortification and a humiliation which exceeded the bearable.

She felt it incumbent to say:

"Do you still believe that Vasalov was my lover?"

"My dear, I have never blamed you, never held it against you."

"I see you still do believe it."

Silence.

"Ursula!"

"Well?"

"Say something—for heaven's sake—say something."

"What shall I say? Years ago, when happiness was within our reach, when I was ready to give you affection and esteem and love, you spoiled our dream by this same infamous charge. You repudiated the belief a few weeks later when I so far did violence to my primal sense of honor as to produce proofs of Guido's identity. It seems now that you were insincere in your repudiation, and that you continued to believe your wife a woman with a past."

"What language!" Hauser strained his declamatory powers in his effort to convince his wife that never, no, never, had he thought of her in that light.

"You mean—do you not?—that you did think of me in that light, but that because you happened to be fond of me you did not apply the customary terms to me," said Frau Ursula, feathery contempt in her voice. The man's futility as a psychologist was really amazing.

Hauser felt the despair of a man who is being carried out to sea on a raft within sight of those who could save him if they only would. He redoubled his efforts to propitiate his wife. He not merely humbled himself, he groveled, he not merely groveled, he cringed. But Frau Ursula was obdurate. He had excoriated her. That she was excoriating him did not enter into her head. She said, finally:

"You are protesting too much. Let there be an end to this farce. I definitely made up my mind an hour ago. I am going to leave you."

Hauser did not believe that she really meant what she said, but he did not dare say so. He realized that she was in a dangerous mood and that he must not cross her. He resumed his pleading. He pointed out to her that he had waited her pleasure and served for her twice the period of Jacob, prototype of faithful lovers, had waited and served for Rachel. He had, he said, in all that time, observed fidelity to his marriage vow. He loved her—her alone.

Frau Ursula laughed bitterly.

"Love!" she said, contemptuously, "is love love without respect?"

"In your heart of hearts you know that I respect as well as love you," said the man. "You know very well that only supreme love, real love, not passion or desire, can make a man overlook a fault like that in his wife."

It was a telling point, but it did not find its way to her heart at the moment. It lay, lightly tossed upon some superficial brain, whence, unexpectedly some day, it would penetrate the thinking level and emotional depth.

She said:

"A woman who has been culpable may be and probably is grateful for such an extremity of love. An innocent woman resents it."

"Ursula!" She knew from his tone that he was changing his mode of attack. "Ursula, in justice you must admit that the proofs of Guido's identity which you submitted were not proofs at all. You showed me neither birth certificate nor any other legal document. You showed me an old daguerreotype of a friend of Dr. Koenig's, and asked me to see a resemblance between the face of the

portrait and Guido's face. I saw none. But I pitied you immeasurably. I realized that you were making a last desperate effort to save your self-respect, I realized that if I rudely shattered the fiction of Guido's birth and antecedents, which you wanted me to believe in, I would irreparably damage your self-esteem. I therefore committed a pious fraud. I pretended to believe your yarn. Why, why do you blame me for all this, since my deception was actuated by the purest dictates of love?"

"Your effrontery is sublime," said Frau Ursula. "In the same breath you implore my forgiveness and repeat your fault. I refuse to continue the conversation."

"You will have to hear me out." Hauser's manner changed. He was no longer a suppliant. His habitual air of authority and finality had come back to him. "You must listen to the rest of what I have to say. There was Vasalov, and the resemblance between him and your son was too palpable to admit of quibbling."

Frau Ursula laughed bitterly. She saw no resemblance between Vasalov and Guido, and she failed to apprehend that another eye might perceive what she failed to see.

"What then," Hauser continued, "could I suppose but that you were the boy's mother? I have never seen any woman so pathetically enamored of her offspring as yourself. An adopted child, indeed! Would you, could you have loved a strange child as you loved Guido? I leave your common sense to supply the answer."

Frau Ursula, when not blinded by anger, had a fine perception of justice, which means that she had a lively sense of relation between cause and effect. She was now somewhat abashed by the crudeness of her own past psychological processes which had allowed her to overlook a matter of such pith and moment as motive. Truth to tell, she had all but forgotten the original motive that had prompted her to essay the role of Guido's mother, would perhaps have forgotten it with even greater completeness and greater speed if it had not been for Dobronov and Vasalov and the all-pervading, interpenetrating Synthesis. In brief, Guido's father had been completely eclipsed by Guido—and by Hauser. Guido's personality had won its own supreme place in her heart. He was hers—as surely as if he had been flesh of her flesh and blood of her blood.

Yet she was shrewd enough to realize that that nearness, that spiritual closeness, that sense of inviolable intimacy would never have been achieved by the son of a different father.

So, to herself, she grudgingly admitted Hauser's perspicacity even while she was furious with him for evincing it. She no longer loved the second Guido. He was to her now nothing but a memory and the joint author of the wretched Synthesis. Nevertheless, Frau Ursula preferred to have Hauser continue to think her unchaste, hideous as that condition appeared to her, to disclosing to him that she had given love where love had not been returned.

She decided to let the case against her go by default.

"I could supply the answer but I shall not do so," she said, coldly. "I am leaving your home to-morrow morning with Guido."

"Surely not!" Hauser spoke with determination. As a penitent petitioner he had seemed to her contemptible. Now, imperious, masterful, almost overbearing, he compelled her admiration. But she held out against him. She did violence to every softer emotion. She steeled herself against his charm. It is not too much to say that she loved Hauser as she had never loved him before at the moment when she was preparing to leave his home. Only one thing on earth could have made her reverse her decision: if he had said to her, conviction in his voice and eyes and manner: "I've been a brute to think you capable of that sort of thing. Appearances were against you. The evidence of my senses was against you; the evidence of my judgment was against you. Nevertheless it was unforgivable that I did not cast aside this cumulative evidence in favor of the higher tribunal of the soul! I should have known that you were quite incapable of *that*—that passion could never have moved you to a point passing decorum. I am culpable. I have steeped myself in evil in thinking evil of you. My sins have made me a pariah and an outcast. But—forgive me."

The miracle for which Frau Ursula hoped did not happen. Hauser, at her request, finally left the room unshriven.

Early the next morning Frau Ursula and Guido left the Hauser mansion and went to the Anasquoit Hotel to

live. Guido assumed his real name, his satisfaction in the change being greatly augmented by the presence of the precious little word "von," that silver-decked herald of his patronymic. He remembered what Egon von Dammer had said about names ending in "itz", and about the name "Guido" and that it comported ill with "Hauser." He almost forgot his shame in his German blood and in the vampirish performances of Germany in his excitement and joy that Hauser was not his father.

He remembered the War and his disgust in it and Cecil as he walked home to the hotel from college for lunch, and fell immediately into a black fit of self-disgust. He had heard enough about the first Guido von Estritz from Dr. Koenig and Grossvater Geddes to know that the name was instinct with honorable traditions, but he realized that he failed to grasp its entire significance and all it had stood for. Presently it seemed to him that the honor of owning so fine a name was too great for his own untested honor. Then he remembered "The Russian woman" and an entirely different set of feelings were aroused. His facile emotions were in a state of geyser-like turbulence and variability.

He was in the singular position of being proud of his racial affinity to Russia but ashamed of his Russian mother; on the other hand, he fairly palpitated with delight in his von Estritz heritage, while detesting the thongs which, by virtue of the von Estritz blood, bound him to Germany.

Frau Ursula apprehended and sorrowed. Great as was the boy's love for her, he had not uttered one word in commiseration of her plight—for the plight which he was directly responsible. She had not been able to bring herself to tell Guido her true reason for leaving Hauser, and it irked her horribly that Guido accepted as verities the platitudes with which she had explained her separation from Hauser.

"You and I will be happier alone," she had told him, and he had acquiesced in the statement without question or parley. She did not wish him to suspect the true reason and yet, self-contradictorily, she desired that he should surmise that there was an ulterior motive.

But Guido surmised nothing of the sort. He fell in quite unquestioningly with the suggestion that the Hauser household had been disrupted for the express purpose of making life happier for Guido von Estritz. He saw nothing preposterous in that. Frau Ursula wondered and wept in secret. She, who had allowed her selfish pride full sway in taking the important step, was revolted by the healthy egoism of normal youth which sees in every agreeable occurrence a propitious interference of Providence, and reduces all actors on the stage of life, save only self, to the condition of satellites.

Frau Ursula was to pay dearly for her immoderate indulgence in pride. She understood this before her first day of freedom was half over, and was filled with wild regrets. She hoped desperately, tremendously that Hauser would come to the hotel to renew his plea. But Hauser did not come.

Meanwhile the news that Mrs. Hauser and Guido, the latter under a new name, were living at a hotel, blazed through the town like a fire and brought Dr. Koenig and Mrs. Erdman and Tante Baumgarten hot-haste to the side of Frau Ursula. She saw them and none else, telling them, for circulation, that her husband and she had agreed that a separation was desirable. Guido's story was known both to Mrs. Erdman and to Dr. Koenig, and she authorized them to tell it to anyone who asked, with the necessary elision of Guido's Synthetic Destiny.

Dr. Koenig was consumed with curiosity as to the effect upon Guido of his new knowledge concerning his destiny, and questioned him regarding his attitude.

"It's a pretty tall order to wish on a fellow, isn't it?" Guido rejoined, a reply which, couched as it was in American slang, scandalized the old physician. In spite of his almost ferocious love for his adopted country, Dr. Koenig violently disapproved of that trait of Young America which Janet had once described as "flipness." He brought the conversation around to the same point again, only to encounter a silent, stolid resistance very unusual in Guido. The plain truth is the boy was suffering from a species of stage-fright, the same sort of stage-fright which had almost paralyzed his creative powers after the Professor's

superlative praise of his short story. A similar, but much stronger sense of panic oppressed him whenever he thought of his "destiny." The ridiculously exaggerated value placed upon his pre-destined and fore-ordained career he felt would neutralize anything he might have achieved unhampered by such a string of nonsense. That "The Russian woman" was partly responsible for the plan discredited it entirely in his eyes.

Mrs. Geddes sent up her card on Tuesday, but did not ask to see Frau Ursula. On her card was penciled, "If I can be of service, command me," an unobtrusive way of extending sympathy which Frau Ursula appreciated.

Frau Ursula experienced an odd reluctance to show herself in the familiar streets of the town. The truth is that she was ashamed. There was no reason under the sun for being ashamed, but ashamed she was. Some hidden spring of the heart had been touched and was sending forth an unsuspected freshet of contrition.

Day after day went by without bringing Hauser to her side. Hope died at last, leaving her bewildered, frightened and pained beyond words. She missed his hearty, slightly domineering way, his jocularities with dependents, the aroma of his inevitable cigar.

One evening, in a spasm of insufferable nostalgia, she donned her hat and coat and walked to the door of the house in which she had ruled as mistress so long. From the stoop, through the window, she saw Hauser sitting at the table, quietly reading his evening paper. Something amused him. He smiled. That smile, the natural expression of a transitory amusement, hurt her, shocked her inexpressibly, outraged her sense of decency. She tried to argue with herself. She reminded herself that only that afternoon she had not merely smiled but laughed quite heartily at something Guido had told her. But somehow Hauser's smile did not seem in character. She had pictured him as spending his evening in supine, woe-begone, idle desolation. Instead she found him reading his paper and smiling.

Like a whirlwind there rushed over her the recollection of his accusation or insinuation or whatever the cruel thing deserved to be named that had brought about their rupture.

She withdrew her hand from the door-bell and walked away furtively, fearful lest some passing acquaintance recognize her.

"If I loved him less I might forgive him," she told herself. The next day she began her quest for an apartment.

CHAPTER VIII

AND, since Vasalov had not availed himself of Dobronov's brilliant idea of cross-assassination, the War went on. Vasalov had rejected Dobronov's suggestion not because he thought the scheme hare-brained or ineffectual, but because he believed that the war was the harbinger of a new era in Russia and must therefore not be interfered with, a ruling which elicited no comment whatever from Dobronov save an expression of personal relief, because, since his plan was rejected, he was absolved from the grim responsibility of having consigned to death a dozen or more of his fellow-beings; for, as he said naively to Guido, "After all kings and queens are human beings."

There had appeared by this time a large crop of books dealing with the causes and origins of the War, which everybody was reading—Cramb, Bernhardi, Fernau; and there was a secondary crop of authors from which everybody was quoting without having read them, such as Treitschke, Nietzsche and Houston Stewart Chamberlain. The pro-Germans employed their usual tempestuous fury in combating, or trying to combat, the arguments provided by these authors which were hostile to their cause, and in doing so showed the same lack of restraint, of decorum, of propriety which was marking their military exploits, making of their argumentation an orgy of linguistic intemperance, a banquet of unreason, an outrage upon the body of logic and truth.

Life had become a continual round of bickering, dissension and nervous strain. There was no escaping from the War. It lapped one round. It fascinated, hounded and obsessed. Stan, it is true, when Guido tried to talk to him about the War, said, easily: "You ought to read less of that war stuff, Guy. It's getting on your nerves. After all it's a European mix-up and no affair of ours. Americans aren't bothering much about the War."

"Lots of them are, I think," Guido retorted. "Seems to me I have heard about America-fed Belgium and our ambulance trains and——"

"Sure you have," Stan interrupted him, smiling. "Whenever anything happens anywhere it's always up to the U. S. A. to shell out, isn't it?" He grinned facetiously. "But because we are losing our money is no reason why we should lose our sanity as well. Nix on the War, Guy. Forget it."

Guido did not forget it. He longed for Cecil. He missed Cecil out of all proportion to the short time he had known him. One brief note he had from the English lad from a training-camp in Canada—an unsatisfactory note from the human point of view, but replete with the vernacular of the soldier and with details of the grim business of soldiering. Truth to tell these details did not interest Guido very much. He was too much preoccupied with the casuistry of the War to give heed to mere military exploits. He had a feeling, shared, in the early stages of the War, by many other excellent folks older than himself, that if only the Germans of America could be persuaded of the rottenness of their cause, and experience a change of heart, the German armies would be outmaneuvered and outmarshaled as a sort of corollary to the moral victory of suasion.

One curious phase of the German-American psychology was their deplorable lack of logic and their utter inconsistency. They slew reason to serve German partisanship and prostituted heart—the much-prattled of, greatly lauded German heart—to uses incredibly base.

Their favorite method of meeting and refuting the hair-raising news from Belgium and France continued to be the old calumny: English lies. When news came so palpably, indelibly true and direct that this fashion of dealing with it was of no avail, as, for instance, the shelling by German battleships of the three unimportant English coast-towns, Hartlepool, Whitby and Scarborough, of which no one, at least no one in America had ever heard, no means were shunned to supply a plausible justification. "The English would do the same if they could," was one sneering comment on this flagrant violation of international law, implying that the wrecking of unfortified towns was a

military exploit requiring the superior efficiency of the German navy! "The English violate international law in blockading Germany," was another popular rejoinder. "Why does America always find fault with Germany and not with England?"

The only inference to be drawn from the latter plea was, of course, that cold-blooded murder in German eyes was no more reprehensible than a technical illegality. Guido told Otto as much one day and, for a full ten minutes, turned his friend into a maniac.

They were quarreling continually now-a-days—these two old friends. Time and again Guido vowed that he would never set foot in Otto's house again. But Otto was Otto. His personality remained and the mysterious vital current that reaches out from one personality to grasp at another remained unimpaired as of yore. Guido might quarrel with Otto, might hate him, might adjurate him, might fight him even, but Otto, nevertheless, was Otto, and, being Otto, had a place in Guido's scheme of things which no other friend might ever fill or usurp.

Besides, Otto was as avid of war discussion as Guido, and Guido relished nothing these days excepting a good long talk on the War. The War with its issues and causes had become Guido's chief pastime. It filled leisure moments, it sat with him at meals, it went to bed with him and dominated his dreams as it inhabited his waking hours. His mind was like the newspapers—one wondered what had formerly occupied the space now given over to the exigencies of the War.

Frau Ursula, meanwhile, was trying to find an apartment for herself and Guido. She was somewhat undecided as between an apartment or a house. But to furnish and equip a house was an undertaking from which she shrank in view of the scarcity and universal undependability of servants. The four excellent servants of the Hauser establishment had been persuaded by her to remain with her husband. There was the Bohemian cook, a true genius of the kitchen, worthy of the *cordons bleus*, and the housemaid or second girl, as the Anasquoitians term this variety of maid, the laundress who also waited on table and washed dishes and silver, and the man of all work, who cleaned the windows and trimmed the hedge in summer and shoveled

the snow in winter. In addition there was the chauffeur, a well-bred fellow, whom neither Hauser nor herself regarded precisely as a servant. There had been a Grand Council of War in the Hauser kitchen on the fateful Monday when Frau Ursula had left her husband's bed and board. Opinion was hopelessly divided. The cook was for staying with the master, since the mistress desired it, adding that she was sure the *Herrin* would be back before long and would like to find the household intact. The housemaid, a pert, grasping Berlin girl, with coarse red arms, said she didn't believe in staying in the house with a divorced or a "separated" man. She feared for her good name. The laundress, an Irish-American girl, who was a widow with a child to support, said she'd risk her reputation all right, but she was afraid the job would leave her. The man of all work, a poor derelict whom Hauser had picked off the street one bitter cold night, was for staying with the master. The majority finally prevailed, and the four servants remained in the handsome big mansion to wait upon the sole remaining member of the family.

Frau Ursula filed her name with the two principal real estate agencies of Anasquoit and waited. She was neither comfortable nor uncomfortable at the hotel. She was not in a frame of mind to be either. Her sensory system was in a state approximating suspended animation. During the first fortnight after leaving Hauser she was harrowed by a fear which was half a hope. If that uncertainty should transform itself into an expectancy, there was, she told herself, only one course to pursue. She would write Hauser, asking him to come to her, and she would then show him all the available documents concerning Guido's birth, and acquaint him with her true motive in assuming charge of the boy.

The expectation, however, which would have achieved a reconciliation, did not eventualize. Frau Ursula wept for a day and a night, and then set definitely about the task of finding a home for herself and her son.

She was ably seconded by Mrs. Erdman. The erstwhile widow of a relative of a Signer had a very much more definite idea of what Frau Ursula wanted than Frau Ursula had herself. She located a very charming apartment in a two-story house on upper Bismarck Street, near Fern-

wood Street, which was to fall vacant on the first of the year. Frau Ursula demurred. Since she, Mrs. Erdman, had *her* heart set on an apartment for Frau Ursula, she, Frau Ursula, must at least insist on a real apartment instead of the upper floor of a two-story house. Thus quoth the usually urbane Ursula. Mrs. Erdman ignored her friend's little outburst of temper, and urged the advantages of the apartment she had in mind. Frau Ursula, with considerable acerbity, repeated that she would never consider a flat in a two-story house. If a flat it was to be—what earthly sense in dignifying a miserable fifty or sixty-dollar flat by the name of apartment—she must at least have a real flat with pulleys and pulley-pole and a dumb-waiter and a janitor to take off the garbage and look after the steam-heat and hot-water plant. Most particularly was a pulley indispensable. Without a pulley, the clothes had to be dried in the yard. That meant that the clothes-lines were at your disposal only one day a week. Say it rained on Monday. You couldn't shift your day's washing to Tuesday because the other family was entitled to the use of the yard on Tuesday. Say it rained again on Wednesday. You would be reduced to the ignominious strait of washing on a Thursday, leaving the ironing for Friday. And Friday was cleaning day so that the ironing would have to be left over for Saturday. No, thank you. A flat in a two-family house without a pulley-pole was not to be thought of.

Mrs. Erdman had never seen Frau Ursula so crochety before. She listened indulgently and registered Frau Ursula's objections on the fingers of her left hand, and then eliminated them. There was no pulley, it was true, but there was a lovely patent clothes-dryer in the yard—one of the circular ones like an inverted umbrella—and as the occupant of the first floor, who was also the landlord, sent his laundry out, the circular dryer in the yard was at Frau Ursula's disposal every day in the week. There was a dumb-waiter. There was a garbage shoot. There was an ash-shoot, and the landlord, on hearing for whom Mrs. Erdman was inspecting the rooms, had gallantly offered to attend to Frau Ursula's furnace along with his own.

"Why should he offer to do such a thing?" Frau Ursula demanded, hostile and suspicious.

"He said he had always admired you immensely," said Mrs. Erdman, "or, rather, he allowed me to infer that he admires you from the way he talked about you."

The compliment did its subtle work, as Mrs. Erdman had intended it should. A woman must be very far gone indeed in health and spirits before losing her feminine zest in a compliment.

"I might look at the flat," said Frau Ursula, tentatively.

Guido's entrance put a stop to the discussion. He came forward, beaming with pleasure at seeing "Mrs. Thornton," and bending, kissed her cheek as if he were still a child. Mrs. Erdman patted his cheek affectionately in return. The little demonstration was never omitted between these two excepting when they met in public.

"Well," said Mrs. Erdman, "I hear you have a new first name as well as a new surname—Guy von Estritz—no longer Guido Hauser."

"Stan started that Guy business over a year ago," Guido said. "And now the boys think it great sport that I should have a double set of names."

"And you also have a destiny, I hear," said Mrs. Erdman, a little wickedly, for she knew from Frau Ursula that he hated to have mention made of it.

Guido's face darkened.

"Well, the boys don't know anything about that, thank goodness," he said, fervently. "Lordy Lord, how they would guy me!"

"And what do you intend to do with your destiny?" Mrs. Erdman pursued.

"Lose it," said Guido, succinctly.

Frau Ursula was annoyed and showed it. As we know she had looked upon the Synthesis for a long time as a sort of black charm, but her maternal pride, ably stimulated by Dr. Koenig, had been so flattered by the thought of an especially waiting destiny for her boy that she had gradually been weaned away from her dislike and fear of the Experiment.

Besides, the Synthesis had been a cause of fruitful suffering to her. To have Guido treat it with such scant courtesy wounded her.

She said nothing, but her looks spoke volumes.

"You see," said Guido, "if the Vasalovs think I am going to follow in their footsteps and go about scattering bombs in the vicinity of folks I don't like, they are making the mistake of their lives."

Frau Ursula became indignantly excited.

"Guido," she said, "I desire, I honestly desire that you employ a certain decency of language in referring to your mother, even if you are not able to feel a little kindness for her. I hope I will not have to speak of this again."

Guido laughed bitterly.

"You are wasting your breath," he said. "I'll have nothing to do with the Russian woman or her pursuits."

"What has Dobronov been about!" Frau Ursula exclaimed. "Has he given you no insight at all into the conditions of Russian life?" Frau Ursula prided herself upon her generosity in referring, with such signal magnanimity, to a cause and a woman which were alike anathema to her.

"Dobronov? All Dob cares about is his soul and Russia's holy mission. Mrs. Erdman, you should hear Dob on the War. By the way, how does the Doc feel about the War?"

Mrs. Erdman assumed a gloomy look—or was assailed by it.

"Dr. Erdman is of course a hopeless pro," she said.

"Apparently you are not," said Guido.

"Of course not," said Frau Ursula. "Guido, what a thing to say."

"My dear friend," said Mrs. Erdman, a little sententiously, "I am not as ardently pro-Ally as might be supposed. The truth is since coming to live here among you I have made so many dear friends, all of them German, that it is hard to credit these Belgian atrocity stories."

"How about dropping bombs from Zeps on sleepy little towns, or bombarding them with long-range guns from cruisers and men of war?" Guido demanded.

"I have heard Germans claim that an exhibition of their capacity for inflicting injury might bring about a speedy termination of the War," Mrs. Erdman replied, after a moment's hesitation.

"In brief—*Schrecklichkeit*," said Guido. "A desire to

terrorize, to intimidate, to paralyze with fear—that's the charge that is being made, you know."

"There are so many charges being made," said Mrs. Erdman. "The very causes of the War remain obscure and unexplained."

"Personally," said Frau Ursula, "I do not comprehend how anyone, having lived in Germany and America, can prefer the Fatherland. But if they do, why do they remain here?"

"Because they make a better living here," said Guido, contemptuously.

"I should hate to think as ill as all that of my compatriots," said Frau Ursula, gently.

"I dare say Guido is right," said Mrs. Erdman. "And, after all, it's not as if the Germans who come here found in America a homogeneous population into which they refuse to be absorbed. They find, on coming here, community within community of French, Irish, Walloons, Spaniards. Each of these nationalities foregathers, is clannish, exclusive, and resists amalgamation. Why, then, should the Germans alone divest themselves of all feelings of race, legitimate as well as prejudicial? It's asking rather much of human nature, isn't it?"

"The Germans have an able apologist in you," said Guido.

"I'm trying to be fair," said Mrs. Erdman, with her sweet smile. "I am trying to get their viewpoint."

"Their viewpoint," said Guido, "is race prejudice. It's race prejudice and envy that have made this war. Everything German is good. Everything not German is abominable and there is no health in it."

"Not so," said Mrs. Erdman. "They do not think everything German is right because it is German, but, because, being German, they think it is right. There is a vast difference."

Frau Ursula looked a little startled. Guido lolled back more comfortably in his chair and stretched out his handsome legs to aid mental travail.

"I think I understand," he said, "it's not race prejudice the world is dealing with so much as unconscious race unanimity?"

Mrs. Erdman nodded.

"That's it," she said.

"It would make the whole business infinitely more formidable," Guido hazarded.

"Infinitely."

"And infinitely more of a menace."

"Infinitely."

"You know, that's rather a deep thought of yours."

"I've arrived at it in the simplest way imaginable. By observation—sympathetic observation," said Mrs. Erdman. "Morning after morning I heard my husband comment on the news while reading it. Day after day, when I went out to do my marketing, I heard practically the same comments made by other German-Americans. The comments were made simultaneously, so that a conspiracy for the circulation of orthodox German comment was excluded. It's the same with Americans. Let any two Americans, 'real' Americans, Guido, read the war news and their comments will agree in fundamentals. No one needs to furnish them with ready-made condemnation of Germany. It springs spontaneously to the lips."

"The Germans claim that is so because our American newspapers color the news," Guido remarked.

"And do not the German newspapers color *their* news? At any rate, I do not think that that proves anything. I know it doesn't as far as Doctor Erdman is concerned. He reads 'The Sun.' He cannot read German, you know. He was brought up in the Middle West, where *Deutsch-Amerikanische Realschulen* are an unknown quantity. Nor has he ever been in Germany. Nor does he belong to any German-American society, club, association or *Verein*. He is, to all intents, as thoroughly an American as myself."

"And yet——" said Guido.

"And yet——" Mrs. Erdman agreed. "So you see, Guido, I dare not allow my indignation against Germany to mount too high. I do not wish to quarrel with Frank. A self-respecting woman cannot quarrel with her husband and remain with him. I love Frank more than my own life. I know him to be the soul of honor. I have never known him to do an unkind thing. So I content my soul in patience, hoping that the evil obsession will pass when, at some not too distant day, the Germans do some particularly wicked thing."

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"Seems to me they have gone the limit even now," said Guido.

Mrs. Erdman sighed deeply.

"I suppose they have," she said. "Good-bye, my dear friend." She kissed Frau Ursula. "I must go. To cook dinner for my pro-German husband."

Mrs. Erdman began collecting her parcels and packages. There were a good many of them, for she had been shopping at the Five and Ten and at several all-package stores, and Guido offered to help her carry her belongings home.

He slipped downstairs ahead of her and ordered a taxi, an act prompted not entirely by unselfish thoughts of the lady's comfort. Guido was at the age when the carrying of paper bags and parcels, of anything, in fact, excepting a handsome leather bag, represents a lamentable lowering of human dignity—something like going to live in the slums, from necessity, not from humanitarian benevolence, which latter cause, of course, would surround even the slums with the pink halo of romance.

Guido, at seventeen, was not a saint.

He wondered vaguely that Dr. Erdman, with his growing practice, should allow his wife to practice such petty and degrading economies, as were represented by the bakers' dozen of parcels and bags with which he, Guido, was now loaded down. Dr. Erdman's wife might have furnished the key to the riddle. Half of Dr. Erdman's patients were free patients, in fact, he showed a marked preference for poor patients whom he not only treated free of charge but, more often than not, supplied with medicine for which he paid the druggist out of his own pocket. He was, as his wife had said, the soul of honor and kindness.

Ensconced in the taxi, Mrs. Erdman said:

"Guido, I am glad of this opportunity to speak to you alone. I've tried to get my bearings from your mother, but have failed. Doesn't she regret having left Mr. Hauser? She strikes me as not happy."

"Why should she be unhappy?" Guido inquired, with the callousness of youth.

"My dear boy, she loved your father—I mean, Mr. Hauser. She loved him dearly. I feel that something more occurred than she told me. I do not want to know what. I do want to know whether a reconciliation is out

of the question. I'm an old friend. I could approach Mr. Hauser tactfully."

"I should hate to see my mother reconciled to that man," Guido retorted.

Mrs. Erdman suppressed the obvious retort. She schooled herself to gentleness before saying:

"Guido, I am going to presume on our old and intimate friendship to say some very personal things to you."

"Say what you like!" Guido accorded the desired permission with sultan-like assurance that whatever was to say, since it involved himself, could not possibly be of an unpleasant nature.

"I think," said Mrs. Erdman, "that in this matter of a reconciliation you should consider your mother only, and not yourself."

This seemed rather a tame beginning to the young man after Mrs. Erdman's moving preamble. Suddenly, however, the implication struck him, and he said, a little uncertainly:

"If my mother desires a reconciliation, I would not influence her against it, of course. But I'd hate to see her and Mr. Hauser make it up. I know it sounds beastly, seeing I believed him to be my father until a month ago, but my mother always seemed to me very far above him."

"That is not the question," said Mrs. Erdman. "The average woman is superior to her husband for the simple reason that the spiritual standard is higher among women than among men. Besides, Mr. Hauser is by no means an inferior man. He treated you very badly when you were a child, and you bear him a grudge accordingly, as is natural. When you are a little older you will understand what I mean when I say that he is not really a bad sort. The point is—is a reconciliation feasible, and, does your mother desire it?"

"Supposing it were and supposing she did," Guido responded with considerable animation, "you would hardly expect my mother to suggest it to him, would you?"

Mrs. Erdman did not reply, and Guido, after studying her expressive face for a moment, said, contritely:

"I suppose you think me abominably selfish."

"If you are, it's a fault you share with the majority of your fellow-creatures,"

Guido reddened.

"But you would like to see me free from the common fault?"

"Naturally. I have been so awfully fond of you."

"'Have been?' "

"Am still, of course, silly boy. You came into my life when—well, we won't go into that now. Suffice it to say I love you, my dear lad, as if you were a younger brother. And because I do, I venture to speak to you as I am doing. You must never do anything to hurt your mother."

"I never intend to," said Guido, a little nettled.

"What I am trying to get at," Mrs. Erdman continued, "is this: Did your mother leave Mr. Hauser only because, in a burst of rage, he told you prematurely that your mother is not your real mother?"

"But he did not tell me that," Guido retorted in surprise. "He told me that I was not his son. So if my mother had not wished to tell me about the Russian woman and all that farrago of nonsense about the Synthesis and my destiny, she need not have done so. She might have invented a first marriage to account for me. As a matter of fact, she was married before she met Mr. Hauser."

Mrs. Erdman sat as if transfixed. A great light had burst on her. She had witnessed some bitterly cruel scenes between husband and wife in the days when she had made one of the Hauser household. She had enjoyed the partial confidence of the wife. She knew that a new and violent estrangement had occurred after Vasalov's first visit to the Hauser home. She more than suspected at the time just what had happened between Hauser and Frau Ursula. All women are shrewd in reading between the lines in matters of love.

She comprehended suddenly what had put the stricken doe look into Frau Ursula's sweet eyes.

"The scoundrel," she murmured, "the scoundrel."

Guido caught the word above the rattling of the taxi, but it seemed much too violent a word for the context of fact. He thought that he had misunderstood Mrs. Erdman, and asked her to repeat what she had said. Instead of doing so, she said, coldly:

"I realize there is nothing to be done. I confess I was

hankering to play the role of peace-maker. But it's of no use——"

"You see," said Guido, with the Jove-like insouciance of youth, "Mother left our old home just because she wanted to. He gave her an excuse and she was glad of it, I suppose. They really did not pull very well together."

So soon had the boy forgotten the pangs of jealousy which Frau Ursula's preoccupation with her husband had caused him throughout the autumn months.

The taxi stopped in front of the Erdman apartment. Guido paid the chauffeur, and then possessed himself of such bundles as Mrs. Erdman had not yet gathered together.

As he turned to carry them into the house, he saw Erna Friedman and Lieschen Schlick approaching. They smiled the malicious, sly, amused smile which he remembered as one of the chief exasperations and trials of his school-days. He tried to shift his parcels so as to disengage one hand. Several parcels slipped through his fingers during the process of transfer. He tried to catch them, but his fingers had all turned to thumbs, and instead of salvaging the runaways he increased their number by spilling some clothes-pins from an improperly fastened bag. The clothes-pins played a tattoo upon the sidewalk and increased his agony. He had not succeeded in lifting his hat before the two girls had passed him. Erna looked back over her shoulder, laughed and said maliciously:

"Has Guy von Estritz turned errand boy for the Hauser establishment?"

Guido was furious. He blushed to the roots of his hair. Mortified beyond endurance he dumped the parcels, none too gallantly, into Mrs. Erdman's arms and made off after a rapidly muttered "Good-bye." Mrs. Erdman thought that he intended to follow the two girls and smiled as adults smile at the eccentricities of calf love.

Guido, needless to say, walked off in a direction opposite from that taken by his former class-mates. His wrath abated speedily. It was skin-deep only.

He wanted to reflect on all that Mrs. Erdman had said about the war and about the pro-German attitude. He was not nearly as much interested in the case of Hauser versus Hauser as in the case of Humanity versus Germany. Yet her remarks touching his mother lingered in his mind.

Women were so odd, even the best of them! With all due respect for Mrs. Erdman, whom he genuinely loved, she certainly had enjoyed talking over the separation. Now his mother *was* different. She did a thing and she was done with it. He didn't believe that there was any ulterior reason at all for leaving Hauser. He remembered frequently wondering as a child why in heaven's name his mother had married her husband. The old wonder returned, and added to it was a new wonder that she had stood him so long. It appears from this that there had been more than one hiatus in the story which Frau Ursula had told Guido.

Anyhow, he didn't want to think about his mother's husband. He wanted to think about the War. But, in obedience to Mrs. Erdman's suggestion, his thoughts snapped back to his mother and to Hauser. He felt it incumbent to dwell upon his family affairs instead of upon the War for a little while. He compromised with his conscience. He would think about the Hauser affair a quarter of an hour daily so that he might devote the rest of his leisure time to the thing which was absorbing him body and soul.

Elschen Marlow, standing at the Parsonage gate, made a welcome diversion. The two young people had not seen much of each other recently, and she commented upon the great change.

"So you have changed your name," she said, in her straightforward, prim, demure way.

"Yes," he cried, gayly, for Elschen always made him feel light-hearted and irresponsible. "I've done what is usually considered a woman's prerogative. I've stolen a march on the girls."

Elschen blushed. It was a very delicate blush, gentle and refined as she whose cheeks it graced. She blushed rarely, and Guido looked at her in surprise. To cover his surprise, he said, thoughtlessly:

"Some day, Elschen, you will be changing yours."

Light words, lightly spoken. The girl hugged them to her heart, and read into them hidden meanings, clandestine hopes, tentative promises and a golden future.

Such is the stuff that heart-aches and heart-breaks are made of.

Guido, having unconsciously implanted the seed of disappointment in love in the young girl's heart, walked rapidly home to the hotel, blissfully unaware of the mischief he had wrought. In speaking to Elschen he invariably assumed a different tone than he employed toward any of the other girls of his acquaintance. He was gentler, more playful and more gallant. There was something in her, some daintiness, some aloofness from life that appealed to his tenderness. And always she aroused a wish in him to carry her off home with him as a sister. He felt that it would have been pleasant to see her at his mother's side, employed on one of the interminable pieces of embroidery with which she was forever busy. It is to be feared that he considered her purely in a decorative, not a human light. It never occurred to him that Elschen might misconstrue his sallies of gentle raillery, or that she might care for him. Also he was entirely innocent of a selfish desire for easy conquest. Conceit was not among the faults which were depriving him of a place in the Hall of Saints.

He was very attentive and dear to his mother all through supper. He always waited upon her hand and foot, and usually smothered her in kisses at least thrice a day. But to-day, in addition to his usual blandishments, he drew her out, spoke on subjects other than the War, subjects dear to the feminine heart such as the price of breadboxes and curtain poles. And, what was more, he really listened to what his mother had to say. He remembered that Hauser had always evinced a genuine interest in all these household innovations, and this had left himself blissfully at liberty to be preoccupied with his own affairs and uninterested in the affairs of others. He suddenly conceived a better opinion of Hauser, and saw himself in a sorry light, a light really much more unflattering than he deserved. For youth is both *gauche* and callow. Both tendencies inhere in youth, and it is only when these trends harden into habits as youth passes on to maturity, that they may be said to have graduated as full-fledged faults. Guido was not obtuse, nor selfish, nor shallow. He had the necessary kindness, intelligence and breadth to correct his own moral angularities.

He perceived that his mother was going to derive a good

deal of satisfaction from purchasing furniture and carpets and linen and planning the entire equipment of their new home. But what after the excitement had died away? Would her new home seem an empty shell to her? To such reflections had he been quickened by Mrs. Erdman's intervention. While his mother was telling him of a host of little inconsequential details, he was rehearsing all she had done for him in the past, the marvelously tender love and forbearance he had had from her always. An enormous wave of tenderness swept over him.

"Mother!" He touched her hand surreptitiously while the waiter's back was turned, as if they had been sweet-hearts instead of mother and son.

"What is it, *mein Herz?*"

"Mother, you're the saintliest woman! When I remember all you have done for me! *Mutterchen, liebes, einziges Mutterchen*, I can never hope to make it up to you, but I love you, I love you a hundred times more than if you were my own mother. If one could pick one's mother the way one chooses one's wife I would have picked you."

The spontaneity with which the lad spoke, his high sincerity brought a glow of ineffable joy to her eyes. The stricken doe look faded from it. He saw that he had made her superlatively happy, and was abashed and humbled and proud all in one that such power should reside in him.

Later that evening, after he had prepared his home-work for the next day, the War claimed him. It tugged at his heart-strings, it plucked greedily at his mind, it cried loudly for a hearing, for utterance, for discussion, for a brace of tongues.

"I'm going for a walk," he announced, buttoning himself into a long coat. "My head is on fire."

"Are you going anywhere in particular?"

"No, it's too late for calls. It's past bed-time. Besides, I want the exercise and the air."

They kissed.

"Guido."

A look of tender regard in her eyes made him unbutton his coat as a preliminary to dropping upon his knees.

"*Mutterchen*, what is it?"

"My son, I am expecting great things of you—do not disappoint me."

Was she thinking of the wretched Synthesis? He remembered Mrs. Erdman's expostulation, and choked back his angry retort.

Alone at last, outdoors, he cut quickly away from the smug respectability of Bismarck Street and the more frequented thoroughfares of the town. He had latterly taken to walking at night in the poorer streets, where his martial meditations were fairly secure from interruptions. He did not wish to meet anyone he knew. He did not wish to talk or to argue. Least of all about the War. He wanted to walk and to think about the War as faithfully and as efficiently as he might.

The night was murky and bleak, the town shrouded in one of the semi-translucent mists which linger in the streets of New York and vicinity on some nights in November and December. Guido was very sensitive to atmospheric conditions. He gloried in fog and mist and rain. He loved the sunshine too, but the sunshiny day was like a major scale, its smiling contentment and boisterous good-nature excited without satisfying, stimulated without probing beneath the surface. But these slate-colored, low-toned, low-pitched days and nights when the streets were filled with a mist so tangible that it brushed the face and left it wet as with dew, smote upon chords in his soul which he had not yet learned to analyze and to classify.

He did not at once begin his long-deferred meditation upon the War. He thought first of Guido von Estritz and the strange destiny which his parents had desired to thrust upon him. A curious feeling of guilt beset him at times because he could not bring himself to think of his Russian mother save with anger and contempt. Frau Ursula had plead with him not once but dozens of time. Without avail. He could not picture Varvara Alexandrovna excepting with the assassin's bomb. He could not think of her as his father's wife, as a mother who had desired to dower her babe as no babe had ever been dowered before. He could not even think of her as an exile from home and friends, as a prisoner in an unclean, ill-ventilated, ill-heated cell. He could not pity her. He could have pitied any other criminal, enduring so relentless a sentence,

but the humiliating, outrageous fact that this woman was his mother placed her beyond the pale of his pity.

He even refused to receive or to look at a miniature portraying her as a bride, which Frau Ursula had in her possession.

He was not—as has been said before—a saint, and certain currents of life bearing an educational impress had barely touched him as yet.

His mind, with a snap, came back to the War.

He had a feeling sometimes that this War was an elemental thing, something like a fire, or a cyclone, something caused by tremendous forces of nature in cataclysmal conflict. Or, like an epidemic. The War was a disease, perhaps, a terrible scourge, the like of which had never been known, although there had been lesser outbreaks before. To find the cause of this War then was like finding the germ causing an exceptional disease, like cancer, or infantile paralysis. Were there different germs for different wars? Or, was the germ always the same, and differing in virulence and malignancy only because of a divergence in local conditions?

The thought fascinated him. It was to him not a metaphor, pointing an analogy, but a profound truth. It was a physical law transplanted into the spiritual world, for the cause of the War, of course, must have been due to spiritual causes. Here his thoughts began to falter and become uncertain. If, as Germany claimed, the War had been caused by England's desire to annihilate a formidable commercial rival, the underlying cause would have been greed. Well, greed was a disease of the soul, a detestable and fatal spiritual disease. And so was envy, and from all the furious onslaughts against England in which the pro-Germans indulged, he was inclined to ascribe to envy on Germany's part, and not to greed on England's, the true cause of the War.

But he felt he could not be certain.

He felt that he was at the threshold of invisible things, upon flaccid, yielding, treacherous, quicksand-like ground.

The War was barely four months old and already the one cry: Slav against Teuton! had been relegated to the limbo of forgotten things.

Yet it was possible that there had been a grain of truth in that slogan.

Slav against Teuton. Teuton against Slav. No, not that. Teuton against all other races. And that meant America, too. In time.

Guido was terribly stirred. An intense excitement had taken possession of him. He was racing along through the moist embraces of the mist-laden air like a madman, unconscious of hour, goal or mileage. The motion of his legs seemed to be energizing his brain.

A myriad thoughts pressed about him, clamoring for utterance. They reached out toward him like hands, like fingers. Like faces they peered at him through the mist.

Teuton against—no, not Slav—but *all* races.

What was it Cecil had said about race-consciousness? And Mrs. Erdman? She, too, had glanced at race-feeling as a legitimate, not an illicit passion and possession.

He became bewildered. His sense of values seemed to shift and lose itself. A word, a phrase had power to produce in him gigantic upheavals. His sensitiveness to all impressions, particularly to the spoken word, was extreme. It was, perhaps, his pre-natal heritage.

He clung desperately to the thought of America and America's message and America's mission.

Yet if race-feeling was a legitimate function of a people, if its exercise was capable of producing such miracles of focused, concerted expression, of national genius and will as Notre Dame, and Westminster Abbey, and the Cathedral at Rheims—God! The Germans had wrecked that, too! and the Kremlin, and St. Sophia, and—yes, Shakespeare, Shakespeare unexpatriated and unadopted by the Germans, what, then, was going to happen to America, America, the tramping ground of all races? Where did America come in? Was anything wrong with America?

At this juncture he recalled Arnold Bennett's eulogy of the Pennsylvania Terminal Building with its attendant tribute to the imagination of a people which had made such a triumph of architectural grandeur possible.

But, beautiful as the passage was, and flattering as it was to America, and ungracious as it was therefore for an American to quarrel with it, Guido felt that the passage

missed its mark. He felt that the superlative key, in which it was pitched, should be applied to superlatives only.

And he did not consider the Terminal Building a superlative of national expression because it was frankly Egyptian in character. It might have been suggested by the model of the Temple of Karnak in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Just as the astonishingly beautiful facade of the Sub-Station of the Postoffice opposite the Terminal Building was not American in character, but Greek.

Was Wesendonck right? Did America have no indigenous literature, art, music, architecture?

He tingled with resentment.

At any rate, humanitarianism was indigenous to the soil of the New World. No mistake about that.

He wondered whether not entirely too much importance was being attached to racial traits, shortcomings, habits and cults.

For the Doors of the Baptistery, St. Paul's, the Pantheon, and—last but not least—Shakespeare were, after all—whether Shakespeare or Bacon wrote Shakespeare—the work of one man. Could so huge a collective body of human beings as a nation be actuated by so indivisible an accord as to merit co-credit for individual works of art? To think so seemed balderdash. Yet, incontrovertibly, there were eras in art, literature, music and architecture in which a nation's entire genius seemed to effloresce in one direction. Perhaps telepathy furnished the explanation. Perhaps the human mind, or the human soul, or whatever the particular organ was whence the impetus originated, were mere subdivisions of a spiritual species, differing slightly in savor, as individual apples of a single species have some a finer, some a grosser flavor, than their fellows.

Suddenly there reverberated through the chambers of his soul the line:

“We love as one, we hate as one.”

The mighty malevolence of that shook him as never before. He had his answer.

There was such a thing as a collective soul of race.

And America?

With all races represented?

He felt cowed, frightened, distraught. He felt like a traitor. But his faith in the destiny of his own country was superb.

Whatever was true or not true with regard to race, America was safe. America was on the right track. America would accomplish the impossible. America would amalgamate and fuse where other countries would sever and disjoin.

America had a mission. It was the one thing of which he felt overwhelmingly certain.

He recollected that the Germans also thought that they had a mission. And the Russians; and the English; and the French. He seemed to be running around in a circle. And suddenly light dawned on him in profusion.

If that was so, and apparently every nation did believe in its own destiny, then, of course, America was rightest of all, since in her were merged all races.

For a moment he thought he had gone off at a tangent from the ring in which he had been circling like some circus creature.

Then he perceived that he had merely slipped from the inside to the outside of the ring, and that the center about which he was curveting was the same.

What was going to happen to America? Amalgamation of races? Predominance of one race? There was no third possibility that he could think of. Which, then, was is to be?

Suddenly some subterranean impetus caused his thoughts to turn to Cecil. A violent longing to speak once more to the English lad seized him. For all he knew Cecil was now in a troop-ship, bound for Britain. For a few minutes nostalgia for his friend wrenched him. Cecil was the one person in all the world whose company he desired and had desired before during these strange midnight wanderings. Cecil might have helped him. Cecil and he would have differed. Cecil would have suggested view-points strange to him as the antipodes, but the suggestion of view-points alien to his nature, by forcing him to argue, would have made plain to him where he himself stood, what he himself believed and desired.

The clock on the church steeple tolled the hour. The sound came to him through the fog muffled and indistinct as the gleam of the street lights. He awakened rudely to the fact that it was one o'clock and that he was in a part of the town which abounded in resorts of ill-repute.

He felt chill and tired. Not a soul was in sight. This somewhat reassured him, since the only characters whom he might reasonably expect to meet in this section of Anasquoit at night were tramps and worse.

He stepped to the curb and strained his eyes and ears for any indication of a trolley or a taxi-cab. Finally he heard the whizzing of an automobile coming in his direction. Owing to the dense mist he could not make out whether the automobile was a taxi-cab or a private car. So he stepped into the street, lifting his hand to the chauffeur. The car flew past him, and was swallowed up by the mist. But Guido heard it slowing down, and knew that it had stopped not far away. So he ran after it.

The driver was waiting for him.

"I have a fare now," he said, "but the gent says you can jump in. He has only ten more blocks to go."

Guido accordingly scrambled into the car, and seated himself, an action which was accelerated by the sudden starting of the car. Having shut the door, Guido began to thank the passenger for his hospitality to a stranger. He had barely concluded his brief acknowledgment, when a sonorous, well-trained voice, which he recognized as belonging to Pastor Marlow, said:

"Well, well, so it *was* you? And what may Guido von Estritz be doing in this part of the town at one o'clock in the morning?"

Guido flushed with annoyance. It is a churlish thing to pick a quarrel with a benefactor, and a quarrel, he felt, would be inevitable if he employed candor untempered by subtlest diplomacy in replying to the Pastor's question.

In his preoccupation the inwardness of the question escaped him entirely. There was considerable excuse for a minister of the gospel who, picking up a lad in his teens at one in the morning in a part of the town fairly peppered with disreputable resorts of every description, felt it incumbent to demand an explanation.

"To be perfectly candid," said Guido, essaying the light tone of social repartee, "I was settling the War."

If it had been Guido's intention to divert the Pastor's homily upon the strait and narrow path, which the good man was preparing to deliver, he could not have hit upon a better expedient than by telling him the truth. He forgot all about the delinquency of which he had suspected Guido a moment before. The aberrations of youth may be pardoned, but an aberration away from race is a much more serious offense!

"In favor of England, eh?" the Pastor demanded.

Guido did not reply.

"I have heard of your apostasy," the *Herr Pastor* continued, "and I am sorry for it. I am sorry you should hearken to the tongues of our enemies who blacken and smirch and defame us.

"You are not a communicant of my church," Pastor Marlow continued, "and I am somewhat in the dark as to your religious belief. But I assume I am addressing a Christian. I want you to recall the words of St. Paul: 'Now abide these three, hope, faith and charity, but the greatest of these is Charity.'

"Of charity so much has been written that its enormous importance in the life of the soul has become almost self-evident. Even to non-Christians. Hope, too, is self-explanatory, for, lacking the hope for eternal life, who would have the courage to face all the tribulations which beset us on earth? But of faith too little—far, far too little—has been said. For without faith hope could not exist. Hope is more or less vague, uncertain, faltering. Faith focuses hope, supplies its foundation and gives it point. Faith is the adamant bed-rock upon which hope, the airy and agreeable superstructure, is reared. Without faith, love itself would assume a haphazard, vagrant, shambling nature, for without faith, in practicing charity, we divest charity of its divine mantle and transform it into a thing earthly and of the earth. We cannot dispense with faith. It is a quintessential ingredient of the love we feel for God.

"And it is not enough that we have faith in God, the Father, we must have faith in men, our brethren, more particularly must we have faith in our kindred. The bonds of consanguinity are based on faith. The mother loves

her babe because she has faith in its unrevealed character and natural endowments. The husband loves his wife, the wife her husband because they have faith in each other's righteousness and honor. It is right and natural that we should feel this faith in those of our blood and of our own race. Why, then, my boy, have you done this unnatural thing—espoused the cause of our enemies?"

Such was the man's eloquence, his sincerity so evident, that Guido felt profoundly shaken. He felt culpable at the moment, culpable and ashamed.

The car stopped with smooth suddenness before the rectory. Pastor Marlow opened the door and called to the chauffeur that he and the young gentleman were not ready to leave the car and that he should be paid for his wait. Then, shutting the door, he leaned back comfortably in the well-cushioned seat and repeated his question.

"Why, my son, why, I ask, are you, who are honorable and upright from all I hear of you, doing this unnatural thing?"

The boy struggled to free himself from the lethargy into which his intelligence had been lulled by the Pastor's words. He told himself twice, thrice that he didn't believe a word of what Pastor Marlow had said. To begin with, he was not a Christian at all, and all this talk of being Children of God and Brethren in Christ was mere fine rhetoric. He could not believe in all that, of course. His destiny did not permit. Nevertheless, it was all very beautiful and helpful and kind and good.

"Well?" the Pastor inquired again.

The boy shook himself free from the spell which the silver tongue of Pastor Marlow had fastened upon him.

"All you said about faith and love was very beautiful," he began. "But—I am not a Christian. Consequently, I have neither hope nor faith in the Christian's acceptance of those words. I do believe, however, in a Divine Activity or Will lying back of the Universe." Guido paused, a little frightened by his boldness in thus setting forth his belief. Until this moment he had been unaware of holding that belief, but, he argued, sub-consciously, unconsciously he must have held it or it would not have sprung ready formulated to his lips.

"And I have a faith, a quite incredible faith—in humanity. It is because of this faith in humanity that I condemn the Germans."

"The Germans! You speak as if you yourself were not a German."

"I am an American."

"Politically, geographically. Racially you are a German."

"You are aware, of course, that I have Russian as well as German blood."

"To all intents that signifies nothing. Your father was a German. Your name is German."

"My grandfather left Germany because he disapproved of the German form of government."

"No, no, my lad. Your grandfather left Germany because there was a price on his head as he had been one of the leaders in the insurrection of 1848."

"Insurrection!" Guido was now thoroughly aroused. "My grandfather believed in democratic ideals. He wanted to help establish constitutional government in Germany. Say he had gone back to fight for that issue, if it had been possible to do so, would he have been a worse American because he desired to propagate the principles upon which the American commonwealth was founded? Insurrection!" the boy exclaimed again. "I know two old *Achtundvierziger*, and they call it a Revolution."

"Well, well, we will not quarrel about terms," said the Pastor, soothingly.

"At any rate," Guido continued, "if all the blood in my veins were German, as only half is German, I would still be anti-German because as I said before, my faith in manliness and honor embraces all humanity and not merely one branch of it."

Pastor Marlow hesitated a moment before he said:

"I, too, have faith in all humanity, ultimately. But at present we must have faith in one section of humanity as opposed to another section. Why, then, have you withdrawn your faith from that part of humanity of which you yourself are a part?"

Guido became violently excited.

"I had faith—a quite prodigious, colossal, iron-cast faith until the very moment that the Kaiser declared war," he

cried. "Now in view of all the outrages committed—I speak only of those which the Germans do not deny—my faith has crumbled away. How any honest man can continue to be pro-German after Belgium, after Scarborough and Whitby, after the bombing by aircraft of unfortified towns, I cannot comprehend. And I do not want to comprehend."

Pastor Marlow showed neither resentment nor anger. After a brief pause, he said:

"German unfortified towns, like Nuremberg, were bombed by French flyers before Germany ever thought of bombing English towns. As to the battleship raids there are, I think, reasons for that which we cannot comprehend. You see, my lad, although appearances are against Germany, I have faith in her."

"Faith!" snorted Guido. "International law and——" he stumbled over the connective in a vain effort to find a German equivalent for chivalry. He did not succeed, and made mental note of what was either his own inadequate vocabulary or a deficiency in the German language. "International law forbids the slaughter of non-combatants," he began anew, but was gently interrupted at once by the Pastor.

"And are the lives of non-combatants really so much more precious than the lives of our soldiers?" he asked. "*We* Germans think very highly of our soldiers. Our army does not consist of mercenaries, of paid hirelings like the British and American Armies."

Guido's blood beat tempestuously in his temples.

"You have hit the bull's-eye by chance, Herr Pastor," he said. "*You* Germans think highly of your soldiers because you think highly of war. It is in your estimation an honorable profession, the noblest profession, in fact, of all. Americans, I think, regard war as something hateful and wicked. We admire the soldier and his courage, but decidedly we do not regard soldiering as a sort of sacrosanct profession. We do not deify it. That's because we see in war a dirty job that has got to be gotten through with. And what's more, America never goes to war unless she has just got to. And that's not cowardice, either. It's just the feeling that war is a last resort, and not to be entered upon lightly."

"I'm afraid," said Pastor Marlow, "your views have become hopelessly contaminated."

"If to be hopelessly contaminated means to place right above race, then, by all means, I am hopelessly contaminated," Guido replied. "If I were of French extraction, and had lived in the Napoleonic era, I would have been as violently anti-French as I am anti-German living in the days of William Hohenzollern. The hegemony of Europe has been the dream of more than one despot. William the Second is not the first to cherish that dream."

"I see," the Pastor said, still more mildly, "that you have allowed yourself to become completely saturated with English lies."

"And Belgium—is the violation of Belgium an English lie, also?" the boy cried.

"Also! If you knew anything about German discipline you would know that German 'atrocities' are an impossibility."

"But they occur in every war," said Guido. "They occurred in the Boer War, in our own Civil War, they were reported to have occurred during the American occupation of Vera Cruz. But all these instances were cases of individual outrage, not concerted outrage ordered by the military authorities for the purpose of intimidation."

"I am quite willing to believe that the British and the American soldiers are capable of atrocities," Pastor Marlow replied, "you see, the rag-end of humanity enters those armies. With the Germans, all that is different."

Guido vaulted from his seat and was about to jump out of the car, but the Pastor restrained him.

"I must to bed," he said mildly. "I come from a dying man." He climbed from the car, a little heavily. From the curb he recited Geibel's verse, so popular with Germans throughout the world:

*"Und es wird am deutschen Wesen
Einmal noch die Welt genesen."**

Now Guido loved Geibel's poems, and thought his "Osterlied" as perfect a lyric as Shelley's "Ode to a Sky-

*And German culture, German truth,
Shall one day save the world in sooth."

Lark." It so happened that the verse which the Pastor had quoted had not recurred to him. He could have wept when he heard it. Were all things German to turn to dross in his hands? Were all things German to assume either an insolent or a base aspect?

He was so shaken that he did not reply.

After reaching his hotel, Guido sat in his room without undressing, his face in his cupped hands, until long after three o'clock. His talk with the Pastor had quickened in him the fierce blaze of shame which he had been at such pains to beat down. It had another, a contrary effect. Guido was, as we know, extremely susceptible to the charm of language. He was as sensitive to beauty of words and of diction as a musician is sensitive to purity of tone and a painter to the value of color and line. And German was the language which he invariably spoke at home with his mother, the language earliest in his recollection, the comfortable, easy language of love and intimacy, the language which, when the last is said, still came to his lips with slighter effort, with a more liquid fluency and geater spontaneity than English or Russian. Pastor Marlow's German was very beautiful, and his words had clamorously touched certain inflammable chords of heart and soul. But his intelligence they could not vitiate. Heart and soul, deeply stirred as they were, plead with all the fiery eloquence of emotional direction before the tribunal of the mind. His mind weighed fact against sentiment, truth against habit, honor against tradition, and refused to be corrupted, saying sternly to heart and soul: "To you I will render the things which are yours; to honesty and honor the things which are theirs."

He suffered cruelly. The boy, in that dark hour, had a glimpse of the real bias which underlay the unaccountable wrong-headedness of his German-American friends. His shame died away. His judgment seemed to sway and to falter. Emotion arose like a tidal wave and encompassed him. His spiritual struggle was terrible. He felt dimly that if he abandoned himself to this wave of unreasoning feeling he might, like Otto and Eddie and Henry, allow his reason to be usurped by the money-sweet voice of racial kinship and pride.

He looked now with eyes that saw clearly upon the

stark, uncompromising, naked truth that he, too, was not immune against the clarion call of race. Cecil, then, was right. You might love your own race or hate it, as Heine had done, as he sometimes suspected himself of doing, but whatever the feeling is that inspires you there is in it a frightful, grappling closeness which you will feel for no race but your own. Like the ties of blood. No matter how divergent you may be in aspiration, character and tastes from your brother, that brother's glory must be your glory, that brother's shame must be your shame.

Such then was the immutable fact which must be reckoned with in the final adjustment of self to country and honor. His race called to him not through convention and custom and habits as it did to his friends, but through the no less potent channel of language.

He felt that he durst not allow himself to be engulfed. It was only the cursed charm of the Pastor's diction that had wrought such havoc in his feelings. As toward a talisman he reached toward his shelf of books for a volume in English with which to exercise the baneful spell. He had been thinking in German. He knew that he must apply a stimulus to those convolutions of his brain whereon was engraved his English vocabulary—English, which was the language of his maturity, of his reasoning and reflective powers as German was the language of sentiment and affection.

The book which his hand happened to secure was the Bible. Guido smiled. The Christian would have seen in that more than mere chance. He opened it. Any book and any passage thereof, so it was writ in fair English, would answer his purpose.

The passage upon which his eye alighted was the thirty-seventh verse of the Tenth Chapter of St. Matthew:

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son and daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

"And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me."

Guido read the passage thrice over and then, with a gasp, closed the Bible and gently replaced it upon the book-rack.

Was there in this more than chance after all?

Father and mother typified home, the homing instinct, the desire to run along easily in the time-worn rut of custom and language. Language above all. And love of Christ, what was that but love of truth!

Simultaneously his thoughts darted in half a dozen directions.

It was, of course, merest coincidence that his hand, groping blindly, should have fetched him the Bible; merest chance that he had opened it at precisely that page, and that his eye had plucked precisely that passage from among its fellows.

Yet henceforth must the Bible be more to him than a mere book.

He had always loved and revered it. Now it was more than a book. It had proved itself a friend, a friend in the hour of supreme need.

The spell which the German of Pastor Marlow had thrown over him was effectually disrupted.

He wished that he had never heard a word of German and revoked the wish immediately. To be deprived of the joy of reading "Don Carlos," "Faust," "Nathan the Wise," in the original German would be a loss only second to the loss of not reading Shakespeare and Meredith in English, or Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in Russian.

Besides, he was not such a weakling that mere love of a language could lure him from the path of honor.

Also, he loved English quite as much as German. In a different way. What was the use of splitting hairs? One loved one friend for one quality, another friend for another trait. One loved an Otto for his gruff loyalty and warmth of devotion, the very qualities which had brought him to his sorry pass in relation to the War. One loved a Cecil for his breadth and poise; one loved a Dobronov for his sincerity and unmercenaryness, for his—well, soulfulness, although the word was detestable.

Thank Heaven, he was thinking in English now.

That accursed German tongue! Yet, heavens! how he loved it.

Still, if the German language had the sinister power thus to affect him, he would not read it or speak it while the War was on.

Yes, he would. He would rise superior to its blandishments. He would read it and speak it and love it as much as heretofore, realizing fully that much as he might approve of the delicate bloom of sentiment of which the German tongue is capable, America embodied his spiritual and his political ideals, and—quite apart from his passionate love of the English language—so long as a man subscribed to the spiritual ideals for which America stood, it mattered not whether he expressed himself in English, in German or in Hindustani.

Although, of course, the English language must predominate. He remembered Wesendonck's prophecy that German would be taught in the public schools of America in place of English ten years after cessation of the War.

That, of course, was preposterous. Was insufferable. He became quite excited. He strode angrily up and down the room until he remembered that the small hours of the morning were hardly the time for a protracted promenade in walking boots in a hotel room, with someone asleep in the room beneath. So he sat down hastily, removing his footwear against a recurrence of insuppressible excitement, which, as like as not, would again affect his feet.

His mental equipment rendered him incapable of accepting any fact as a fact without inquiring into its why and wherefore.

Why was it preposterous that German, or any other tongue, should supplant English in the United States?

In the first place, of course, because English was the language of the vast majority of Americans.

In the second place, because it had been the first language spoken in the Thirteen Colonies.

In the third place—but he could not think at once of a third reason, and yet he knew that a third reason existed and that it was much subtler and in a way more important than the first two reasons. This reason seemed to loiter somewhere just beneath the surface of his conscious thought. But he could not bring it across the threshold of his consciousness. It tantalized him, teased him, eluded him.

He was desperately tired, but he felt that he could not sleep before he had unearthed that third reason.

And suddenly it came to him, lightning-wise, electrically, magnificently.

The Germans—Wesendonck among others—were boastful of the memory-helping quality of the German tongue, and of the peculiar fluidity which lent its roots to easy manipulation by suffixes and prefixes. It was this quality of the German language that had made him boast as a little chap of eleven that he was able to understand every German word unless it had a technical use. Opposed to this well-oiled smoothness of German, with its rubber-stamp effect, was the sharp irresponsibility of the English tongue, with its unsuspected angularities, its amazing richness and variety, its briar-rose quality of wayward but heavenly initiative.

Here, then, was the third reason why English and no other language, *no other language*, must be the language of America. Political imagination and daring and democratic ideals might stand in closer relation to these adventure-breathing, invention-promising traits of the English language than was commonly imagined. And the political phlegm of the German might be due in large part to the very accessibility and easy familiarity of the "memory-aiding qualities" of his language.

Another thing. Guido understood now the mechanism of the spell exerted upon him by German. He had taken his toy apart and seen the engine that animated it. He would enjoy his toy as much as before but it would not hold him bound in supine awe as it had hitherto done.

He was desperately tired. He began to undress. He was so tired that he could not perform the simple functions of undressing automatically. He must give them his undivided attention.

And yet, in spite of his fatigue, he was profoundly excited. His third reason had furnished him with an entire new train of thought bearing upon the destiny of America. And England, too, perhaps. He recalled what Cecil had said about the conjoined destiny of England and America. Pan-Anglo-Saxonism. Why not? Pan-Anglo-Saxo-Americanism! That was better still.

The other races undoubtedly must also play their part. America was big enough for all. Here all must have an equal opportunity. Simply must. He was thankful that

he understood at last what Cecil had meant by race consciousness.

But—was it not strange?—in the very hour that race consciousness had been awakened in him he had again turned away from his own race and clung to the race to which America owed her political greatness.

There was, perhaps, operating in him something infinitely more powerful than a sense of race. He did not suspect it. He did not suspect that he had an extraordinary gift of separating the wheat from the chaff. He would have spurned with indignation the suggestion that his destiny was beginning to operate in him. But truth is truth. And so it was.

CHAPTER IX

GROSSVATER GEDDES took a less complacent view than Pastor Marlow of the battleship raids upon the English coast towns. Guido, calling at the Geddes home a few days after his midnight encounter with the Pastor, was told by Janet that her grandfather had been greatly affected by that particular bit of German deviltry. His appetite had been poor ever since, his sleep interrupted and uncertain. Moreover, he had been greatly dissatisfied with the editorial attitude of the German paper which he read regularly.

"Not a word of disapproval or censure," he had announced after a brief glance at the news column and editorial page, and had then spent the better part of the morning reading the other German papers in quest of a saving phrase of disapproval. He had not found such a phrase. Thereupon he had told his son at the dinner-table that he would discontinue his German paper. But the dear old man had always read a German paper in addition to an English paper, and besides he was plagued by an odd compound of curiosity and faith which, after all, held him to the reading of Teutonic papers, in the vagrant hope that they would yet recant.

Wesendonck had happened to drop in for supper, and there had been a violent quarrel, or would have been if Wesendonck's breeding had not at the last moment asserted itself and inhibited a quarrel with a man old enough to be his grandfather at a table where he himself was a guest.

"Well, and what did Casimir have to say this time?" Guido inquired.

"You know of course that the Germans won the Civil War for the North," Janet threw out, with scathing irony.

"I've been told so," said Guido.

"But I had yet to learn," Janet continued, "and Casimir

completed that part of my neglected education, that to the Germans was due our success in the Revolution."

"What! Why it was German George who made the Revolution and fought it with German troops."

"So we were taught in school. But it seems that the Hessians deserted wholesale from the British ranks, and, not content to escape from the British army, joined the American forces."

"Impelled by what motive?"

"In my amazement I forgot to ask that," Janet retorted. "Probably abstract love of liberty. Moreover, if De Kalb and Steuben had not been our drill-masters, our troops would never have been properly trained."

Guido stared stupidly at Janet.

"And Washington?" he demanded.

"Pray what did a mere surveyor and Colonial colonel know about the training of troops compared with German generals who had had the advantage of being trained in Frederick the Great's army?"

"Heavens and earth," Guido ejaculated. "Gneisenau, a greater soldier than either Steuben or De Kalb, fought with the British."

"Ah," said Janet, "I did not know that. I wish my father or you had been there at the moment."

"And did Casimir condescend to explain what De Kalb and Steuben knew of ambushing and all that sort of thing that Washington had learned in the French and Indian War, and which stood him and his generals in such good stead throughout the Revolution?"

"Ah," said Janet again, "you should have been there."

Professor Geddes came into the room just then, and Janet said:

"I wonder you don't throw him out crop and neck, Daddy."

"Whom? Guido?"

"Daddy! Casimir, of course."

"Not for worlds." Professor Geddes smiled his twinkling, whimsical smile. "He served a dual purpose. It is interesting, in the first place, to watch the enemy mind at work. In the second place, my child, he is a source of inspiration for my patriotism."

"Does your patriotism need inspiring?" naughty Janet demanded.

"Patriotism, unless hard jostled by events, is always in danger of turning stale."

"But," said Janet, "this is not *our* war."

"Not yet," said the Professor.

Grossvater Geddes came into the room, newspaper open in hand.

"There has been another air-raid upon London," he said. "Some twenty school-children were killed." His hand trembled as he pointed to the deep head-lines on the first page.

Janet slipped her hand under her grandfather's arm.

"Don't read about it, *Grossvater*," she said. "Come, let me throw away the horrid old paper and sit in mother's window among her geraniums."

The old man gently resisted Janet, who was trying to lead him to the window-seat.

"Since when do Germans make war upon women and children?" he demanded of his son. "It was not so in my day. And I had such faith in the German race."

"Let us hope, Father," said the Professor, "that the German people will some day—very soon—awaken to the infamy of it all, and will then refuse to allow themselves to be made the agents of civilized barbarism, if the term is permissible."

"Revolution, *Eduard*?" his father demanded.

"I hope so. I think so. I, too, have great faith in the German people. They will stand for all this a little while longer. Then, suddenly, they'll turn against the leaders of the military octopus and slay them."

"I will have faith in the German race a little longer," the old man said. Pathos indescribable rang from his voice. Slowly he went out of the room.

The vision of that little figure, which had become strangely frail during the last months, haunted Guido as he walked home, a stack of German magazines under his arm, which the Professor was sending to Frau Ursula.

These magazines were very splendidly gotten up. The press-work was beautiful, the paper fine and strong, the illustrations exquisite both in conception and execution. How was it possible that a people which had attained such

transcendent heights in art, in literature, in music, in applied art, in science, in medicine and philosophy should suddenly decline to the level of moral obliquity to which Germany had sunk? German-Americans might be mere dupes. But the German themselves—were they dupes also? How could they be? Dupes of what? Of whom?

How could such things as indubitably were being done in Belgium and Northern France be done by the nation which had brought forth Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Klopstock? Guido loved both Klopstock and Lessing. Lessing, with his serene, pellucid, philosophical mind, a mind at once critical and reverent, had, it seemed to Guido, never been justly appraised by his countrymen. He grudged German literature the possession of "Nathan the Wise." There was, he thought, no loftier poem in any language, not even in English. Of all the German poets he loved Lessing the best.

His thoughts turned to Schiller, more particularly to "Don Carlos," in which a passage occurs which seemed to him cruelly fortuitous. *Marquis Posa* beseeches *Don Carlos*, the unfortunate son of *Philip II*, to make an effort to save Flanders from the brutalities of the notorious *Alva* and from the Holy Inquisition. The unforgettably beautiful words rang feverishly in his mind:

*"Gethan ist's um ihr teures Land, wenn Alba,
Des Fanatismus rauher Henkersknecht,
Vor Bruessel rueckt mit spanischen Gesetzen.
Auf Kaiser Karls glorwuerd'gem Enkel ruht,
Die letzte Hoffnung dieser edeln Lande.
Sie stuerzt dahin, wenn sein erhabenes Herz
Vergessen hat, fuer Menschlichkeit zu schlagen."*

And now Germany, the same Germany that uses the name of "Marquis Posa" as a generic name for embodied idealism, in the identical way that the English-speaking world applies the name "Sherlock Holmes" as a generic name to all detectives, was, in the name of culture, pillaging, massacring, raping the same Flanders whose plight in an earlier century had evoked Posa's—or Schiller's—fiery eloquence. The Holy Inquisition then—now, German culture!

Guido felt sick and cold.

Shades of Schiller and Goethe, of Herder, Lessing, Klopstock, Novalis, and phantasm of Ludwig Fulda—who alone among living authors upholds the ancient German idealism—what had come over Germany? Could the devil enter into an entire nation? Was there a devil? Small wonder that in ancient times the belief in devils and witches had been resorted to to explain the otherwise inexplicable. How else could one——

Guido did not conclude his meditation. Blocking his path, hand outstretched, stood Egon von Dammer. Egon had added several inches to his stature in the brief interim in which Guido had not seen him. Slender he had always been, and the aristocratic air which from a child he had worn like a garment had lost none of its potent charm by the change in his height. His delicately white hands, well-manicured as those of a lady of fashion, his peach-blow complexion, eye-brows that were no enemy to the pencil's art, the mustache which was sending out its first tender, blond shoots, the insolent expression of the boyish face, squared shoulders and tapering waist, all seemed to proclaim, "Behold, I am not one of the common people. I belong to the ruling class. I am Egon von Dammer."

"Hauser," he cried, "in the name of all that is wonderful, where have you been keeping yourself?" His manner was one of exaggerated cordiality. Guido smiled. Race again. Cecil, on meeting him unexpectedly after a long absence, would have pretended to frostiness. "I went up to the house," Egon continued, "and was told that Frau Hauser and *der junge Herr* were at present at the Anasquoit Hotel. There I was told that a Mrs. Hauser and a Mr. von Estritz were living there, but no Mr. Hauser. Where in heaven's name do you keep yourself? Why aren't you living at home? Or with your mother?"

Guido laughed. He could not suppress a feeling of satisfaction. He knew with precisely what exclamations Egon would greet the news. And Egon did not disappoint him.

"Well," he said, after Guido had briefly told him of his change in name, "all I can say is that I told you years ago that a fellow by the name of Guido had no business to have 'Hauser' hitched on as a surname, or that it was

an impertinence for a 'Hauser' to have helped himself to the name 'Guido.' Glad you came into your own, old chap."

"And how do you happen to come back to these United States at a time when the Fatherland is impressing her entire man-power?"

"My father is an American citizen, as you will recall."

One cannot recall something one has never known, and so Guido told Egon.

Egon laughed.

"I'm afraid I disapproved of my father's change from a German subject to an American citizen in the olden days," he said, lightly. "I know better now. Heavens, Guido, I've been away only half a year. It seems six years, not six months."

"You do not seem very enthusiastic in the German cause."

"Enthusiastic! My dear chap, one feels for one's own. But, frankly, I'd rather be on American soil to-day than on German. And most emphatically, I do not join the chorus of indignant voices who chide America for being pro-British and pro-French. Most natural thing in the world—that. So I told Otto when he informed me in tears of your 'most unnatural attitude.'"

Guido flushed. Egon's words did not ring entirely true. Nevertheless Guido generously accepted them at face value.

"I am glad you realize that this is humanity's war and that our country—self-evidently—must take the stand she does," he said.

Egon laughed his old supercilious, arrogant laugh.

"Don't jump at conclusions, von Estritz," he said. "I said nothing about 'humanity's war.' Poppycock. Tommyrot. It's a commercial war. *C'est tout, mon ami.*" Egon's manner as he addressed Guido by his new name was indescribable. Thus might a king have addressed a *confrère* but recently risen from the ranks of commoner. It conveyed distinction. It was replete with delicate homage, the homage which equal extend to equal, and in extending flatters himself and his own rank as well as his friend's. Guido was amused. But his amusement was tinged with

a subtle satisfaction. He would not have been young and human if it had been otherwise.

"Spare me the rest, von Dammer," said Guido.

"England——"

"Don't!"

"England is America's mother-country. America and England quarreled. You beat England. The daughter established her independence. The old feud is forgotten. Your language, your traditions, your preliminary history are the same as England's. In the South old English expressions, such as 'gallery' for 'veranda' and 'penstaff' for 'penholder,' still persist."

"And how do you know all that?" Guido demanded, in surprise.

"I have heard my honored parent discourse," said Egon, laughing, "and he, as you know, led a nomadic existence before we came to Anasquoit. So much for England. As for France, your sister-republic, it is natural your sympathy should go to her."

"Our sympathy goes to France and England because they are right," said Guido.

"My dear fellow, you're impossible, you really are. A chap with a name like 'von Estritz' ought not to play the simpleton. He really ought not. You don't want to indulge in all the cheap sentiment which delights the plebeian."

"Do you consider a regard for right and wrong a plebeian attribute?" Guido demanded, hotly. Try as he would, he could not resist a flutter of pride in Egon's new manner to him, in Egon's implication that his birth raised him to a higher level than his compeers. He crushed back the feeling ruthlessly. But its existence opened new vistas of speculation to him. He perceived that in the absence of a strong democratic brake, such as after all was his inalienable birthright and priceless heritage, this feeling of caste-pride must become invincibly strong. This sense of pride, involuntary as it was and remorselessly as he dealt with it, troubled his conscience not a little. In a moment of self-abasement he had gone so far as to suggest to Dr. Koenig that he would drop the "von," an act, which Dr. Koenig declared, if put into practice, would be a bit of patronymic vandalism as bad as dropping the last syllable of Wash-

ington; an example which was unfortunate, as the truncated name of the Father of his Country was suggestive of a homely housewifely occupation, and thus excited young Mr. von Estritz's risibilities.

"I really don't know what you mean," Egon retorted. "Patricians look at life as it is. The rabble want to be fooled with fine words, want to be supplied with motives which rival the moral equipment of the hero in a melodrama."

"And the War—as it is——"

"Nothing but commercial rivalry between Germany and England," said Egon, lighting a cigarette. "Germany, of course, is going to win out. It's good-night for England. I'm rather sorry for that. I don't mind about Russia and France; but England—I rather like old England. I like the English way of doing things." Here Egon smiled—smiled, Guido thought, as if certain particular reminiscences of the pleasant English way of doing things lingered in his mind. There was a quality in Egon's smile which Guido did not comprehend. It was both subtle and suggestive.

"Oh, by the way, do you play pinochle?" Egon demanded.

"No. I don't care for cards."

"Sorry, we are looking for a fourth man. Come and look on, anyhow. We don't play all evening. Only an hour or so. Every Saturday night. We're at the McAvoy at present. We'll be back in Anasquoit as soon as we find a suitable house."

"There's a vacant house corner of Maple and Main," said Guido.

"Maple and Main! My dear fellow, what can you be thinking of? Do you think the Mater would consider anything but Bismarck Street?" Egon burst out laughing. He laughed jerkily, uncouthly. Almost it seemed as if he desired to impart the same angularity which characterized his figure to his manner of speaking and laughing.

"My dear von Estritz—I'm so glad it's 'von Estritz,' now, you know. 'Hauser' was such a shabby name for a chap like yourself to travel under. Come and see me at the McAvoy. I don't believe I will come along with my parents if they move back to Anasquoit. I'm not the least homesick for this wretched little burg with all its *spiessbuergerliche* pretentiousness. But my estimable father

longs for the fleshpots of the *Deutsche Verein*. I don't and I shall continue to live at a hotel or take bachelor apartments. My father consents. My mother objects. Mother, at times, indulges in *spiessbuergerliche* prejudices. I'm quite ashamed of her."

"And what may your mother's *spiessbuergerliche* prejudices be?" Guido inquired.

"Some day I will tell you, Miss Innocent," Egon retorted, laughing. "I have a horrid suspicion that you, too, laddie of the sentimental black eyes, cling to those self-same ridiculous prejudices. If so, I intend to cure you of them."

"I really don't know what you're gabbing about," said Guido, stiffly. For a boy whose mind was supposed to be free from all bias, it was particularly hard to be accused of so primitive a possession as prejudices.

Egon von Dammer laughed at his own wit. He laughed. He guffawed. He chuckled. He slapped Guido on the back and then chucked him under the chin, saying, "What a good little boy it is."

Guido reddened with fury.

"You're behaving like a fool," he spurted out.

Egon burst into a new roar of laughter.

"Prejudices!" he cried. "I'll name you one of yours. Trying to give away a scholarship that represents good money to that idiot of an Otto."

"I don't see how you can call Otto an idiot," Guido retorted, indignantly. "He has a very fine brain. Besides, you did the same—you handed the blame thing back to me."

"Exactly, I handed back what was not mine. What you tried to do was quixotic. What I did was mere honesty."

"Well, Otto needed free tuition and I didn't."

"You needed money, my son, and you gave away its equivalent."

"I have more money than I need," said Guido, still indignant.

A new ripple of laughter burst from Egon.

"My son," he said, "listen to the words of the Sage. No man, especially no young man, has more money than he needs. No, that's too particular. Neither young nor old men can possibly have more money than they need. For why? Ah, laddie of the honest black eyes, thank your

stars I've arrived in time to save you from the Slough of *Spiessenbuergerliche* Respectability. For I am going to save you, in spite of yourself. I must go. I really must. Remember, son, the McAvoy. So long."

Guido parted from Egon in a state of subtle dissatisfaction and annoyance. Egon's manner and words hinted at some extended experience which to Guido was a sealed book. Inexperience in affairs of the heart is particularly galling to the young, and to have his monumental inexperience thrust at him in so insolent a fashion was mortifying in the extreme. Guido tried to wrap himself in a proud air of moral disdain, but curiosity, that attribute which expunged the human race from Paradise, had been aroused and was assiduously employing itself in the vain endeavor to fathom just what sort of experiences Egon had garnered. He could not help but think them discreditable. Witness Egon's comments upon the value of money. Guido's better nature awoke. His disgust became real. He dismissed that portion of his friend's talk from his mind.

Egon's seeming indifference to the War was a more perplexing and inviting problem. Guido did not entirely trust Egon's show of indifference. Guido knew what Stan would say to him on hearing of Egon's reappearance: "Steer clear of that fellow, Guy. He's n. g. You'll come to grief through him yet, just you mark my word."

He decided not to tell Stan that he had seen Egon and in the same breath resolved to avoid Egon. The first resolution he kept—for a while. The second he broke—after a while.

On reaching home, he found his mother vexed and cross. This was the rarest of moods for her. Guido thought at first that it was caused by his tardiness for supper, but during the course of the meal he learned the truth. Since leaving her husband, Frau Ursula had studiously avoided the coffee-parties which she had formerly attended and given to please Hauser. Shortly after Guido had left the hotel with Mrs. Erdman, Tante Baumgarten, her kind face shining with the simple-hearted eagerness of a child, had called, and had informed Frau Ursula that her coffee-circle friends had decided to give her a coffee, here in her own rooms. Frau Ursula had not had the heart to refuse.

Tante Baumgarten had been so pleased at the prospect of a party. Tante Baumgarten was single-mindedness itself. One could see where Otto had gotten that trait from. But, somehow, Frau Ursula could not help thinking at times that single-mindedness was not the unqualified virtue it was thought to be. Lacking it, Tante Baumgarten might have understood the subtler shades of Frau Ursula's ordeal.

"A sort of surprise party with the surprise left out," said Guido, laughing.

Frau Ursula frowned.

"What else did Tante Baumgarten have to say?"

"Oh, they hope to be back on Bismarck Street by the first of May. Poor thing. I believe she lies awake nights worrying about their fall from the exalted heights of Bismarck Street."

Guido, remembering Egon's comments, burst out laughing. He related his meeting with Egon, his narrative, of course, being duly edited by the blue pencil of nicety.

The coffee-party came off the following week. Guido announced his intention repeatedly of not coming home that afternoon before six-thirty, the dinner-hour. Frau Ursula, a little maliciously, refrained from reminding him on Wednesday morning that the day of the coffee had arrived, and the luckless boy on returning from college at four o'clock, walked into a phalanx of two dozen buxom dames, all of them, with the exception of Tante Baumgarten, of Bismarck Street, and sedulous disciples of Teuton orthodoxy. A perfect gale of flattering expletives sang about his ears as he entered the room, inwardly cursing the trick his memory had played him. Such a fine young man! And so tall! And how did it feel to be a von Estritz instead of a Hauser? So romantic! Where would he sit? Oh, he must sit. They all made room for him, or tried to. Two corpulent dowagers telescoped their chairs in the endeavor to do so, and violently abraded their backs, a humorous accident which caused explosive ejaculations of blended sympathy and laughter.

Guido threw his mother a vicious look and received in return a mischievous glance which said as plainly as words: "You can't run away, you know. You have simply got to go through with it."

In despair, since his mother would not connive at his

escape, he collapsed upon a chair between Frau Pfennigwert and Frau Dinkellager, and submitted to the further humiliation of seeing his plate piled high by the two ladies as if he had been a very little boy. Although he was very fond of cake, he feigned a stoical indifference to the pastries and jam-tarts and mocha-cakes which graced his plate, contenting himself with eating one small piece of *Konfekt*. The ice-cream there was no shame in eating. Why shame should have attached to the eating of cake and not to the eating of ice-cream, he could not have said, excepting that ice-cream was supposed to quench thirst rather than appease hunger, and thirst was a legitimate attribute of the adult while hunger was not.

The majority of the ladies were the proud possessors of titles. Frau Pfennigwert was the wife of a doctor. She was therefore addressed as *Frau Doktor*. Frau Dinkellager was the wife of a Professor of Chemistry. She was therefore addressed as *Frau Professor*. Frau Kuehneman was the wife of the new *Direktor* of the *Deutsch-Amerikanische Real-Schule*. She consequently was equipped with the title of *Frau Schuldirektor*. And so on and so on. There was a *Frau Oberlehrer* and a *Frau Pfarrer* and a *Frau Apotheker*. The German love of titles was in full swing in the little town of Anasquoit.

All the ladies had donated either their services or money or both to the German Red Cross Bazaar, and all had visited it and driven nails into the Hindenburg statue and watched their husbands practice in the rifle-gallery, where the movable targets were dummies dressed in the uniforms of French, English and Belgian soldiers. Frau Dinkellager related with great glee that her husband had thrice hit an Englishman—"dreimal einem verfluchten Engländer ein's hingehauen," her husband had said. Frau Trojanschmidt thereupon expressed the pious wish that Herr Dinkellager instead of shooting mere dummies, had killed as many real Englishmen. Frau Pfennigwert contributed the brilliant remark that she supposed everybody present wished the same.

"Well," said Guido, electrifying the four and twenty dames and his mother as well, "I don't." Some of the ladies began to titter. Others exchanged significant glances. A few looked uneasy.

"You know," Guido continued, "my mother and myself are pro-Ally."

"Impossible!" "Unbelievable!" "You are jesting!" "Why, your mother is a German!" "And you are a German!"

"German or not, we are pro-Ally," said Guido. He no longer bothered to set Germans right as to his nationality.

"Is that the reason, *liebe Frau Hauser*, why you refused to help in my booth at the Bazaar?" Frau Dinkellager inquired.

"Not entirely," said Frau Ursula. "My own affairs were so unsettled at the time that I was unable to help you. Otherwise, inasmuch as our own country is neutral, I would have seen no impropriety in helping to provide for the German widows and orphans."

"Our own country a neutral? Germany a neutral?" Tante Baumgarten exclaimed in comic bewilderment.

"Sssss!" said her neighbor. "Frau Hauser means the United States, of course."

"And how do you and your dear mother happen to be pro-Ally, Herr von Estritz?" Frau Pfennigwert inquired.

"We happen to be pro-Ally because the Allies happen to be right," Guido retorted with such an air of sublime aloofness that Frau Pfennigwert, in discussing the incident later on with Frau Dinkellager, designated Guido an "*ein frecher Bengel*," a phrase untranslatable into English unreinforced by Billingsgate.

"You have been misinformed, I see," Frau Pfennigwert rejoined, coldly.

"Perhaps others, and not we, have been misinformed," Guido suggested, glancing furtively at his mother. She avoided his eye, and he took this as a happy omen. Sweet contrariety of human nature! All his chagrin at having blundered into this array of jabbering females—the phrase is Guido's own—disappeared. He became quite contented to be where he was, and in his contentment he forgot his resolution not to touch the pyramid of cake on his plate. He not merely ate thereof but finished the entire pile, all of which further demonstrates the truth of the statement made once or twice before in the course of this history: Guido was no saint.

Tante Baumgarten, peace-loving soul as she was, to

break the glacial silence that had fallen, cast about for something to say.

"Do you know, *Frau Doktor*," she addressed Frau Pfennigwert, "that we have in view a house of suitable dimensions on Bismarck Street?"

The Baumgarten house of suitable dimensions on Bismarck Street had been the standing joke of Anasquoit for the last half-decade. Several ladies began to talk simultaneously, but not in unison. It was Bedlam let loose. Guido contrived to follow the conversation of the two ladies between whom he was sitting, and who talked across him quite unceremoniously. They were showing each other their iron rings, obtained from the German Red Cross in return for their jewelry. All the ladies, almost, had an iron ring and now displayed it with justifiable pride. When *Frau Theaterdirektor* Reinhardt, however, displayed hers, a cry of mingled astonishment and dismay arose.

Frau Reinhardt was the youngest woman present as she was by far the prettiest. She was very smartly gowned. She had been an actress before she married, a fact which stirred a variety of emotions in the breasts of the fair Anasquoitians. There had been a tendency on the part of some of the ladies to make an attempt to debar her from Anasquoit Society, and to close to her the sacred portals of the *Deutscher Verein*, but *Frau Theaterdirektor* owned a pair of beautiful heliotrope-colored eyes and knew how to use them. And use them she did, with the result that the gentlemen of Anasquoit allowed themselves to be fettered and gagged long before their amiable spouses had decided that guerrilla warfare would be more effectual than an open campaign in waging war against so insidious an enemy. A few fair Anasquoitians attempted to cut her at the opening ball of the season, and had the same experience that befell the Prince of Wales upon one memorable occasion—they found themselves cut instead. Thereupon they bowed to the inevitable, and found compensation for their defeat in the fruitful subjects for gossip furnished them continually by the pretty young wife of the *Theaterdirektor*.

The jewelry of which she had apparently disposed for "patriotic" reasons had constituted an exceedingly fruitful source of gossip in Anasquoit. Who had given it to her?

Her husband? Surely not. Dear, kind, lovable *Herr Theaterdirektor* was a genius, positively a genius, and quite without a peer at stage management and repertory work and in the selection of *Kraefte*. But, heavens and earth! Everybody knew that Herr Hauser, and *Herr Schuldirektor* (who had married a rich wife) and *Herr Fabrikant* Schulze and Herr Duden and Herr Boelke, were continually making donations to the *Universal Theater*, which alone saved the *Herr Theaterdirektor* from going into insolvency. Whence, then, the jewelry? The diamond tiara? The wonderful rope of pearls? The amethysts and emeralds? The ruby and seed pearl necklace and earrings? And was all this marvelous jewelry actually cast into the melting pot of the German Red Cross? Had *Frau Theaterdirektor* mayhap made the sacrifice believing that so laudible and exalted a destination might wipe away whatever stains accrued to the jewelry—and to her honor?

Several of the ladies were so touched by the thought which obviously suggested itself to all that they almost wept.

And meanwhile they bewailed the loss of the beautiful stones and lauded the patriotism which had given so lavishly, and hailed Germany as thrice-happy that, on foreign shores and in distant climes, she might command such sacrificial devotion.

Guido sat with downcast eyes. Presently *Frau Theaterdirektor* rose, and, as if embarrassed by the enthusiasm of which she was the storm-center, wandered away to the window to admire some begonias which were lasting through the winter. On her lips was a peculiar, obscure smile. Guido noiselessly slid back his chair and joined her. Immediately the noisy chatter behind them poured itself into different channels.

"*Frau Theaterdirektor!*"

"*Herr von Estritz!*"

"I would like to relate an incident of my extreme youth."

"I am consumed with curiosity."

"One day, at one of my mother's coffees, I noticed a wonderful amethyst necklace of one of the guests. I also noticed the lady's beauty."

"Flatterer!"

"To tell truth is not to flatter. Do not blame me if truth, in this instance, is flattering. I am relating a story—a true story. After the ladies were gone, in walking across the floor, I felt my heel grind into something hard, and I was horrified to perceive that I had stepped heavily upon a very large, beautiful amethyst, which, apparently, had dropped from a loose setting."

"Delightful!" cried the young woman. "I am more than curious to hear the end of your story. Why did you not return the stone to me, like an honest little boy?"

"That, of course, was my first impulse. But the heel of my heavy boy's boot seemed to have injured the stone in some way. It had become dull. So I decided to take it to a jeweler's in New York, who knew me and to whom I could explain my predicament. I did this, asking him to procure me a stone just like the one which I had inadvertently stepped upon, promising to pay half the sum in cash at once and the balance in instalments out of my generous quarterly allowance."

"What happened?" *Frau Theaterdirektor* demanded, breathlessly.

"Do you really wish me to go on?"

"I do, I do, indeed."

"The jeweler, after examining the stone, informed me that it was paste."

"And then——"

"I was very miserable. You may laugh"—the lady, however, was not laughing now—"I spent two miserable nights before I was able to make up my mind what to do. I was in a desperate plight. That paste amethyst represents one of the tragedies of my childhood."

"How old were you?"

"Fourteen."

"Pray, go on."

"I thought of buying a new paste amethyst, and returning that to you. And then I thought I would buy a genuine stone and send you that. Finally I decided that the safest way to spare you embarrassment was to do nothing and to say nothing."

"And you took no one into your confidence? Not even your mother?"

"Not even my mother."

"I applaud your tact. But I'm enormously interested in learning why you told me all this now."

"Pure unselfishness. I wanted to increase your pleasure in the innocent trick you have played upon these ladies by letting you know that someone shares your secret. It was really too good to keep, now wasn't it?"

The lady laughed. She laughed so heartily that she half-closed her eyes and threw back her head to facilitate cachination. She had been famous for her stage laughter and it had lost none of its ancient charm. She was very pretty when she laughed—it was rumored that she had practiced her laughter for hours before a mirror—and Guido found himself wondering whether her throat was as soft to the touch as to the eye.

The chatter at the table almost ceased. Sentences were ruthlessly torn in two, their frayed ends remorselessly left hanging in mid-air. Lips fumbled for words with which to complete phrases to which no one was listening. Guido and the wife of the *Theaterdirektor* held the center of the stage.

The boy had begun to laugh, also, for laughter is contagious.

Finally the lady regained her composure. Sly, envious, malicious glances darted her way. Conversation at the table was resumed without haste and without zest.

"*Mein junger Herr von Estritz*," *Frau Theaterdirektor* said at last, "allow me to tell you that you are the most impertinent, adorable, utterly delicious boy I have ever met. And that is saying a good deal."

"I am overwhelmed!" our hero murmured, and bowed. Mischievousness prompted him to imitate the Wesendonck and von Dammer bow. He wondered how the unwonted genuflection would succeed. It came off beautifully.

"Thus," he quoth, "hath one tragedy of life turned itself into a comedy. Is that the fate of all tragedies, *schoene Dame*? I was very much in love with you, then."

"You were—let me see—how old did you say you were?"

"Fourteen."

"And now?"

"I am seventeen."

"I wish you were fourteen still and had retained some of your moods."

"Perhaps I have."

"Which?"

Guido laughed and the lady laughed. Their glances interlocked pleasurable.

"That would be telling," he said.

"I'll talk to you no longer," said the lady. "If I do I shall succumb to the temptation which I felt once before—when you rode rough-shod over the sensibilities of all those dreadful old women—I shall kiss you."

"I have not the least objection."

"Here?"

"You suggested it," said Guido, adding, "I doubledare you."

"Upon my word," said the lady, "I have never taken a dare in my life. And a double dare. And from a mere infant. You are a very, very naughty boy, *mein junger Herr*."

"You like naughty boys, don't you?" Guido demanded.

"I am going." The lady flounced away from the window, and, going back to the table, thrust a tempestuous general adieu into the midst of the assemblage, shaking hands with Frau Ursula, and tapping one or two other ladies lightly on the back as she passed them. At the end of the table she turned quickly and faced Guido.

"*Verehrte, liebe Frau Hauser*," she called out, and not only Frau Ursula but every other woman in the room gave her an undivided attention, "I hope you will pardon me. I really must kiss this dear little lad of yours. He is such a baby still." And taking Guido's face between her hands she implanted upon his mouth a kiss, a manner of kiss the boy had never received before, a manner of kiss the very existence of which he had never dreamed of. Then, totally unmoved by the consternation, indignation and amazement mirrored in the faces that surrounded her, she tripped airily from the room.

Guido felt shaken, queer, frightened and faint, all in one. Odd sensations traversed body and soul. To his surprise he had not reddened. On the contrary, he had a curious sense of having turned very white and that a new, hitherto unknown expression had invaded his eyes. He could not have pictured the expression and yet he knew it was there and that an entirely new feeling underlay it. He

felt as if his eyes had become larger, and still larger—as large as saucers. He walked the length of the room on limbs that seemed strangely unsteady, as if he had been ill for a long time. He had come around to his mother, and as he sat down he noticed that his hands trembled. Then, because he thought that the trembling of his hand must be apparent to all, he flushed furiously. To add to his discomfiture, he perceived that his mother was angry, very, very angry.

Not until the last of the guests was gone, and the waiters had removed the dishes and the cloth, did Frau Ursula give rein to her anger.

"I am ashamed of you," she said. "If that is the way you are going to behave when you begin going into society, you are going to disgrace me."

"Why, Mother, what did I do?"

Frau Ursula glared at him. Then, without answering, she pushed a chair into place. Anger had translated itself into excess muscular energy, and the chair lurched forward within two inches of the blazing grate fire. Guido drew it back quickly and repeated the question.

"Mother, what did I do? I did not kiss her. She kissed me."

"You said things that led up to the situation. Don't deny it. It takes two to make a quarrel and it takes two to kiss. Heaven knows what you said to her all the while you were talking to her alone. You did almost all the talking. The brazen hussy!" And Frau Ursula, gentle, refined, well-bred, low-voiced Frau Ursula continued to uncork the spill of such vials of wrath upon Guido's head that the boy, his very sensibility outraged and shocked, could only murmur:

"Oh, *Mutterchen, Mutterchen*, please!"

He was at loss to understand why his mother was so frantically angry. He did not for one moment suppose that his mother knew anything at all about the sort of kiss with which *Frau Theaterdirektor* had regaled him. To think so would be to insult her. He was really a very innocent boy.

The man that was to be was a little amused at her wrath. The boy that had been was a little frightened. Wedged in between the two, the youth that was regarded

the spectacle wonderingly. Suddenly, out of the vortex of conflicting emotions arose a strange sensation of pride. Pride in what? He could not have said. In having gained an experience? When next he met Egon von Dammer—in the flush of the moment he forgot his virtuous resolution to see nothing of his former school-mate—there would be two who could play at the game of pretending unutterable things.

Frau Ursula's wrath was abating. That gentle soul could never nurse anger for any length of time. Least of all against Guido. Guido, perceiving that low-tide had set in, stationed himself behind her chair and bent down to kiss her.

"No, don't kiss me. If you allow women like that to kiss you I must decline to share the honor with them."

Guido had an inspiration.

"Mother, be reasonable. What would you have had me do? Draw back? Resist her? Say, 'No, no, my mamma wouldn't like to have you to kiss me?' And stick my finger in my mouth?"

Frau Ursula wanted to laugh—but she didn't.

"I really don't know what has come over you, Guido," she said.

"Oh, I suppose when I heard all that jawing and jazzing——"

"Jawing and jazzing!" Frau Ursula repeated the English slang which Guido had so brutally dragged into his correct German sentence gingerly, as if she feared that it might injure her tongue.

"I suppose the devil got into me. Mother, do you believe in a devil, a real, live devil?"

"I decline to discuss religion with you while you are in this flippant mood."

"As far as I know religion has never been discussed with me," said Guido. "Perhaps, if it had, and if I hadn't been brought up on the milk and pap of No-Bias, I would have known better than to misbehave to-day. I say, Mother, let's drop the subject."

"Have you thought what all those women are going to say about you? The yarns they will tell? Tante Baumgarten? I shouldn't be surprised if Otto were to inform

you to-night or to-morrow that his father insists upon his not associating with you any more."

"Bother the Baumgartens."

"Have you thought what Elschen Marlow would say if she knew?"

"I don't care a rap what Elschen Marlow thinks of me," he asserted stoutly. But his cheeks crimsoned, as Frau Ursula perceived with satisfaction. She felt assured that she had touched his conscience at last.

She was mistaken. Guido did not care what Elschen thought of him. But the mention of her name, by one of the unexplained, esoteric laws of the soul, had conjured up a vision of Janet. And immediately pride and defiance and amusement shriveled away into merest nothingness. And in their place came shame and mortification.

Was he in love with Janet? The boy was so unconscious of his own mental processes that the thought never occurred to him.

He was completely submerged in shame. He drank of it, bathed in it, was steeped in it. It permeated every tissue of his body and every fragment of his soul.

Janet! He told himself that a rascal like himself was not fit to breathe the same air as she who bore that name, or to speak that name. He was, doubtless, what Cecil, employing old English script, would have termed a rotter; what Stan, using the vernacular, would call a piker; what Otto, rude, honest, loyal Otto, expressing himself in bold-faced German text, would call "*ein Schuft*."

He was crushed by the sense of his own moral obliquity. The color receded from his face. It now became unnaturally white and looked pinched and drawn. So stricken did he look, so still and silent had he become that Frau Ursula became frightened.

"Guido, *mein lieber Junge*, was ist Dir?"

"Don't call me your *lieber Junge*," he retorted, desperately. "I'm a brute-beast. I'm not fit for decent society. I'm going to live like Dobronov, in poverty. Hardship will reform me; hardship, and no one to love me."

Frau Ursula became alarmed.

"Guido, you don't mean seriously that you want to go and live on the East Side and risk tuberculosis and vermin and everything?" the poor woman cried.

"East Side? Who said anything about living on the East Side?" the boy demanded, and Frau Ursula breathed a sigh of relief. He had the habit of blind words when greatly moved.

"Mother," he said, suddenly, "why can't we move to New York?"

"Impossible."

"Why?"

Frau Ursula looked at him in amazement. Had she not leased the upper flat in the two-family house? Had she not bought carpets, curtains, furniture? What had put such a notion into her dearest boy's head.

"Sublet the flat and sell all the junk and buy other stuff," said Guido.

"Junk!" said Frau Ursula in a terrible voice. Were hundred-dollar Axminster rugs and eight-dollar net curtains "junk"?

"I know I'm hopeless to-day," said Guido, real contrition in his voice. And renewed his plea that they move to New York.

Frau Ursula became subtly excited. She said she had not the requisite energy to begin flat-hunting all over again. And living in New York would come twice as high as living in Anasquoit. And they knew no one in New York. They would be bored to death. No, manifestly, New York was impossible. She wondered her boy should suggest such a thing.

He perceived that she did not wish to leave Anasquoit and suspected the reason.

"*Mutterchen*," he demanded, bluntly, "do you still love that man?"

Instantly a tremendous change came over Frau Ursula. She was no longer a woman twice Guido's age whom he looked to as a guide and guardian. It was pathetic to see all the dignity of her years, all her fine manner and presence disappear. There remained a woman of uncertain age, who was so sick at heart that she took no pains to disguise her hurt. And suddenly, with unbelievable abruptness, she began to weep unrestrainedly.

"*Mutterchen*, I am so sorry! I never told you, Mother, that I saw him the other day."

Frau Ursula's tears ceased to flow instantly. Grief waited on curiosity.

Guido, returning from the theater one night, had seen Hauser on the ferryboat. Hauser had not seen him. He was carrying an umbrella—the one with the inlaid gun-metal top which Frau Ursula had given him for his last birthday. He was reading a magazine, and when he left the cabin he forgot his umbrella. Guido secured it and with it ran after Hauser.

"And then?"

"*Mutterchen*, it was curious. I always thought I hated him, but when I stood close behind him and saw how gray his hair had turned, and how he had aged, why I couldn't address him as 'Mr. Hauser' or as 'Sir'; so I said, 'Father, you forgot your umbrella.'"

"What did he say?" Frau Ursula demanded, eagerly.

"He started violently and changed color. Then his face hardened, but when I handed him the umbrella he said in his natural voice: 'Thank you, Guido.'"

"And was that all? Did he say nothing else?" Frau Ursula asked as many questions as a love-sick miss in her teens might have marshaled. Was Guido sure Hauser had not asked for her? Or meant to ask for her, if Guido had given him time? Or had Guido given him time to ask? And in what way had Hauser aged? Had he grown thin as well as gray? Had he become careless in his dress, or what? And what magazine had he been reading? And did he seem unhappy or merely forlorn? How had his voice sounded? How had his eyes looked? Was he smoking? Cigar or cigarette?

Guido answered these questions as best he could. Finally, when Frau Ursula had quite exhausted her stock of questions, though Guido could see that her appetite for hearing Hauser spoken of was still unappeased, Guido said:

"Mother, if you desire a reconciliation, why let false pride stand in the way? Allow me to go to him for you. The rupture was really my fault. I am afraid I was very selfish at first and never thought of the heart-ache which my shocking outburst of temper entailed upon you. It is only fair that I should try and bring you together again."

At that, to Guido's consternation, Frau Ursula began to

weep again. She declared that never *never NEVER* would she allow Guido to do such a thing. If Hauser desired to be reconciled, there was one way and one way only to obtain her forgiveness. And he knew it. And if he did not know it she would sooner perish by fire, flood or halter than teach him that way.

Guido was greatly surprised at this outburst. His mother was so soft and pliant and gentle as a rule, that the harsh energy which she infused into her indignation gave the boy to think. He remembered Mrs. Erdman's obscure remarks and exclamations. Probably she had been right after all. There was something more to the quarrel between his mother and her husband than appeared at the surface. He set himself the task of eliciting the truth.

"Mother, you are keeping something from me."

She neither denied nor affirmed this charge, but sat mopping her eyes with her handkerchief, which by this time was soaked through and through.

Guido took the disgusting square of linen from her and flung it onto the bed. Then he went to her bureau and fetched her a clean handkerchief. Their normal relations were entirely reversed.

"So," he said, drying her eyes, and then pressing the clean kerchief into her hands, "why not confide in me? Just what did Hauser do to anger you so terribly? He must have said something else later in the evening. No? Well, I cannot imagine—— Mother, look here, he may not know that he has offended you so deeply. Why not be frank with him and have it out and then make up?"

"And would you like me to make up with him?"

"What I would like is beside the question." Guido felt that he was behaving handsomely. So did Frau Ursula. She patted his cheek, and called him her own dear, true, kind, noble boy.

"Come, mother, you taught me to be reasonable and fair. And in the past you have always been reasonable and fair yourself——"

"Am I unreasonable now?"

"I think you should consider the happiness of your husband and your own happiness more than you are doing."

"Happiness," said Frau Ursula, with sentimental sen-

tentiousness, "is of less consequence to a woman of honor than self-respect."

"You are talking in riddles," said Guido, curtly. His pride was hurt because his well-meant efforts apparently were not advancing the reconciliation in the least.

"I believe you think I am treating Hauser badly," Frau Ursula said, suddenly.

"Oh, no," said Guido politely.

The loss of Guido's blind partisanship was more than the poor woman could bear.

"I will tell you the humiliating truth," she said, bound to retrieve her stronghold in the boy's heart. And in words as modest as her womanliness and the life-long habit of clean thinking would make them, she told Guido of the unjust suspicion which Hauser had harbored against her all the years of their married life; how their marriage had been no marriage at all until last summer; how their marriage vows would never have been consummated if she had not believed that Hauser's shameful and ridiculous suspicion was dead; how suddenly, on the memorable evening of the quarrel, Hauser, by the way in which he had told Guido that he was not his son, had revived a seemingly dead issue, making of it a cryingly, burningly alive problem.

"And that," she concluded, "is my real reason for leaving him."

"The scoundrel," said Guido, unconsciously using the same word which Mrs. Erdman had used. And presently a curious thing happened. Hauser's suspicion placed the behavior of the *Frau Theaterdirektor* in still another light. He understood poignantly how bitterly it must hurt his mother to be thought "that sort of a woman." He thought in broad swathes of thought only, not in fine shadings. He saw red. If Hauser had been at hand, Guido would have done murder. He hated Hauser more bitterly than he had ever hated him before.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTMAS passed without bringing the letter or message from Hauser for which Frau Ursula longed so fervently. She had confidently expected that he would make an overture of some sort before the holidays. She entertained romantic hopes of Hauser coming to the hotel on Christmas Eve, and saying the sweet soft words of which she knew him capable. It was incredible that he should not make one final effort to win her back. He should, she thought, have divined that she was very willing to be friends. She wept all Christmas Night in the privacy of her bed-room. After that she told herself that she was through with tears and repining and grief. But, though she smiled and was bright and cheerful, the brilliance was gone from her cheek, the resilience from her step.

Shortly after the first of the year they moved into their new apartment. It was a charming little home, and should have made for happiness. Guido thrust the War sufficiently to one side these days to observe his mother keenly, and he saw that she was listless and indifferent.

Frau Ursula entertained a good deal during the first months in their new home. She seemed to dread being left alone. She would have entertained even more than she did, but the servant-girl problem was a serious one. The maids whom she engaged were inefficient, and when she attempted to teach them they became insolent and left. Wages were ridiculously high. Thirty-five dollars was being asked by servants whose experience or lack of experience six months earlier would have entitled them to a bare twenty dollars.

The pro-Germans, under guise of righteous indignation, aired their grievances and their sympathies. Formerly the Anasquoitians had attributed the shortage of servants to the factories which were invading Anasquoit and had showered all the scorn of which their restricted but emphatic vocabulary was capable upon the foolish girls who, for the sake

of free evenings and free Sundays, preferred to work in a factory among people of their own sort, to the manifold advantages which accrue to "living out" with a nice family, where, in return for working hard fourteen hours a day, a girl enjoys the privilege of seeing how really "nice" people conduct themselves and their homes.

This song of wrath was now varied. The ammunition works which had sprung up in and around Anasquoit as elsewhere, where bullets and shells were made with which to shoot the good, kind, honest Germans, were absorbing the female labor which should have been scrubbing floors and washing clothes and cleaning windows for the benefit and comfort of its betters.

Frau Ursula did not swell this chorus of oblique censure on the American traffic in ammunition, although she was one of the chief sufferers from the prevalent servantgitis. She decided to send the laundry out—in spite of the circular clothes-dryer, like an inverted umbrella, which waited her pleasure in the backyard every day of the week—and to have her cleaning woman in thrice a week or as many days as she would consent to come. This left her with only the meals to get, enough labor, in sooth, for a woman who had not pared a potato or scraped a carrot since the days when she had been taught how to cook in a fashionable cooking school.

They had Dobronov over for as many week-ends as he would come. Frau Ursula was quite as fond of the eccentric Russian as Guido, and she bribed him to come often and stay long by serving him with plain, cheap dishes such as lentils and rice. The honest fellow did not suspect that he ate doctored food. The lentils contained finely chopped bacon and chicken so cleverly insinuated that Dobronov thought, in all innocence and sincerity, that the red pottage derived its excellent flavor merely from the molasses and vinegar to which Frau Ursula willingly confessed. The rice was baked. Grated cheese and sugar and cream enriched it, and made it a delectable dainty. Frau Ursula blamed the excellent milk for the rich taste of the dish. He knew—did he not?—that "Jersey" cows were famed the world over? Was it her fault if Jersey farmers fed their cows some mixture of grain which gave the milk, when baked, such a delicious flavor? Thus it

happened that Sergius Ivanovitch, while indulging his quarrelsome soul, indulged his long-suffering stomach as well without knowing it.

He had, by this time, divorced himself from Christian Science, to which—as Guido reminded him—he had vowed everlasting allegiance the previous summer.

“I discovered in time,” he explained, “that the Christian Scientists do nothing but talk about disease. Now it’s all very well to believe God is Truth—so He is, of course—but I do not believe that the sole use of truth resides in application to bodily ills. I believe in rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s and to God the things that are God’s. In other words, render to the body medicines and physical care, and to the spirit spiritual advice and support. Besides, they are all so prosperous, so indecently prosperous. Their idea of religion is to better their worldly condition. A pernicious doctrine! A detestable doctrine! The soul finds itself in hardship, in poverty, in sickness and in sorrow. All experience has shown that a certain amount of individual grief and pain are indispensable if soul and heart are to be disciplined and educated. What queer things people do believe.”

During one of his visits Dobronov slipped on the sidewalk and sprained his ankle and was forced to remain under Frau Ursula’s roof for a full week. Guido was surprised upon this occasion to see his friend reveal a new and unsuspected side of his character. He welcomed Guido’s suggestion to play chess; discussed literature and art, rejected nothing that was comfortable and agreeable, and told tales of his Russian home and childhood which gave Guido a vivid insight into the life and traditions of his maternal forebears. Sergius Ivanovich told of the strange custom of the Easter Kiss; of the curious sweet-meats, as strange and unpalatable to the uninitiated as Chinese candy, which are made especially for Easter; of the butter-week; of the great fair at Nijni-Novgorod; of the strange Tartar costumes which are still seen in some parts of Russia; of the wonderful ikons, set with precious gems which ornament the exterior of the Russian Orthodox Churches; of the demand for popes with deep baritones to read the services in Church Slavonic; of the Russian crucifix which has an extra cross-bar near the lower ex-

tremity of the center beam, probably as a foot-rest; of the influence of the Germans, who are hated and feared by patriotic Russians; of the simple faith, the kindliness, the heart-breaking poverty of the peasants; of the marvelous mental receptivity of the Russian mind, and unquestioning, uncritical receptivity which inevitably makes the last argument appear the best.

He spoke of the unbelievable graft rampant among Russian officials, and on the other hand, of the equally incredible spectacle afforded by high officials of state and officers of the army assisting political exiles to escape.

"Do not ask me why," he said. "There are a hundred and one possible motives. Such an official may be touched by the sufferings of a 'political,' or he may be a Revolutionist at heart, and have worked to achieve a powerful office for the express purpose of using it to aid 'politicals.'"

"But if that is so, why should such an official not use his influence in a direct way?" Guido demanded.

"What methods would the direct way employ?" Dobronov inquired.

"I do not know, Sergius Ivanovich, I am not a Russian."

"And I," Dobronov rejoined, "do not know and I am a Russian."

Guido knew Dobronov too well to suspect him of cheap repartee. His friend's reply gave him an insight into the strange strands of well-meaning futility which is so salient a feature of the Russian character.

Frequently, after a long talk with Dobronov, Guido would sit for hours thinking or feeling, he could not have said which. A conversation with Cecil had invariably brought his thoughts into focus, organized and classified and consolidated them. A talk with Dobronov had the reverse effect. It seemed to disperse his thoughts, to stimulate them into radiation in all directions, so that it was impossible to gather them in and set them in order to profit by them. Cecil had facts and figures at his finger-tips. Dobronov cared nothing for facts and figures and his theories were mere vagaries, as unsubstantial as a spider-web and as elusive as moonlight on water.

"Just what use is being made of your vast income, Sergius Ivanovich?" Guido asked him one day.

"My instructions were to divide half of it among the

peasants of my estate," said Dobronov, "in proportion to the number of persons in each family."

"And are you not afraid that an augmented, unearned income will corrupt them and ruin their hope of salvation?"

"What things you do say, Guido Guidovich," Dobronov exclaimed. Then, quite seriously, he added: "The thought has troubled me lately. I think, however, that they have been so desperately poor for so long, and they all have such big families that the individual share of my income cannot be sufficiently large to seriously disturb their chances of salvation."

"There is another possibility," Guido exclaimed. "Six years have elapsed since you came here. For six years you have left everything in the hands of your agent. If the man is dishonest, there may be nothing left of your estate and fortune by this time."

"What things you do think of, Guido Guidovich," Dobronov exclaimed, and then added: "Honesty compels me to admit that the same thought has already occurred to me, and it has worried me not a little. The man whom I selected as my agent was virtually a stranger to me. He may be a man who is easily tempted. Being entrusted with my vast interests may have been his ruin. I should have thought of that in advance. If he has stolen my property, the sin be upon my head, not his."

Was there no limit to the number of iridescent facets of Dobronov's character? Guido stared in amazement. He was abashed. Dobronov was more than man—or less.

Dobronov showed still another wholly unsuspected side. He was fond of children. While confined to the house, he indulged in a great flirtation with a young lady of five who occupied a window in the neighboring house, opposite to his own. Apparently she had the mumps, for her little face was swathed around with flannel. Dobronov and she had great conversations by play of hands, and nodding of heads, and smiles, and twisting of mouths, and screwing about of eyes.

Guido, coming upon his friend unawares one day, caught him at the game, and tiptoed out of the room to summon Frau Ursula. Together mother and son watched the odd proceeding—the grave, blonde, dignified young man, all

gravity and reserve gone, making the most remarkable grimaces at the little girl in the neighboring house. Suddenly Dobronov became aware that he was being watched and looked up.

"Guido Guidovitch," he called, smiling broadly, "will you do me a favor? Have you a toy-shop in this town? Good. Go and buy me a doll—the little miss wants a small one, six inches long, with movable joints, blue eyes and fair hair. Go at once, will you?"

"Apparently," said Guido, "the state of the little girl's soul does not trouble you."

"Little girls and boys have no souls," the amazing Dobronov replied. "How can a mere baby have a moral sense? Ridiculous. That comes later in life. That's why we all love small children, we can indulge their every whim to our heart's content."

Guido went to purchase the doll and Frau Ursula inquired:

"Sergius Ivanovich, how did you know what the child wanted?"

"She told me by motions and signs."

"Surely you did not understand all she wanted to say to you?"

"No more than she understood all I wanted to say to her."

"And what did you want to say to her?"

"Oh, I cannot put it into words. It's like music. Something fine and splendid and delightful, but quite too delicate in meaning to be subjected to the heavy touch of language."

"How gentle Dobronov is," Guido said that evening to his mother, after having delivered the doll to the house next door with a note from Dobronov which he would not allow Guido to read.

"No gentler than your mother," justice forced Frau Ursula to say.

"My mother!" said Guido bitterly. "My mother!" The concentrated bitterness in his voice made Frau Ursula look up swiftly.

"*Mutterchen*, I often wonder, did Vasalov, in selecting Dobronov as my teacher, hope that in the course of his soul's perambulations he would take to bomb-throwing?"

"With a Russian all things are possible," said Frau Ursula with a sigh.

"How long, Mother, since Vasalov paid you that visit?"

"You were eleven years old."

"I wish I might see him," said Guido, "and yet I do not wish ever to meet him face to face. You say I was enchanted with him as a child. And now I hate him. Ah, how I hate him! How I loathe the very thought of him!"

Frau Ursula did not demur. She hated Vasalov quite as bitterly as Guido did, perhaps more, for imbedded in her hatred was the element of fear. She had no specific notion of the nature of the menace which he might yet introduce into her life, but the vapory indistinctness in which her fears were shrouded added to rather than diminished her uneasiness.

"Don't let us think about him—and her," said Guido, suddenly.

"Guido—speak respectfully of your mother!" Frau Ursula entreated.

"Don't call her my mother," the boy said angrily. "That Russian woman is nothing to me, less than nothing." Frau Ursula felt it her duty to expostulate with him, but in the middle of her sentence Guido rose and walked quietly from the room, an incivility of which he had never been guilty before.

Was Frau Ursula displeased or pleased? Who shall say? Guido had given her fresh proof that "the Russian woman" would never usurp her place in his heart. Egoism thus was pampered and fed. But altruism held back egoism and declared it was a shame, a crying shame that the boy would not try to overcome his aversion for his real mother.

But Frau Ursula smiled as she sat over her embroidery.

CHAPTER XI

EVEN supreme and unselfish love cannot wholly comprehend the needs, the pains, the joys of a fellow-creature. Frau Ursula, great as was her love for Guido, did not comprehend in the least what tortures he endured whenever Varvara Alexandrovna was mentioned.

Guido, after leaving his mother with such scant courtesy, donned hat and coat and sallied forth.

He walked rapidly up the street, bound for nowheres in particular. As he approached Elm Street, he perceived that the door of Pastor Marlow's church stood wide open. The light streamed pleasantly from the vestibule onto the flagged path. Guido hesitated a moment. He was heart-sick and longed for comfort. He longed, truth to tell, to have that comfort spoken in German. It was the Pastor's habit, as he knew, to deliver a short address at his prayer-meetings. Guido, hoping to hear he knew not what, entered the church.

The church was well-filled. The front pews were all solidly occupied, and Guido perceived that the occupants were all men. Someone whispered to him that the Herr Pastor was holding an especial service for the Germans who had been stranded in Anasquoit for the duration of the War.

Guido's spirits, which had been at low ebb before, suffered an additional decline. He wished himself a hundred miles away. Prescience told him that the Pastor, in addressing his Teutonic guests, would give unrestricted vent to his German sympathies. He thought of leaving the church while there was yet time, but he lacked the courage to pass the ushers at the door, all of whom he knew.

Pastor Marlow had chosen the text:

"And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew

the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of them that had sold doves."

A strange excitement seemed to pervade him as he began his sermon, which seemed to communicate itself to the congregation. It was a sermon that bristled with tactlessness and cant. Guido, who in spite of the Pastor's German sympathies, entertained a profound reverence for the dominie's sterling worth of character, was appalled by the egregious folly which could lead a minister of the gospel to make such utterances from the pulpit.

The Pastor declared first of all that, using the text as a parable, it was subject to the following exposition: The money-changers in the temple were the English, whose commercial greed had brought about the World-War. Germany, of course, was likened to Christ in her divinely appointed task of chastising and scourging the profaners of the Lord's Edifice. By the grace of God, he said, Germany, a solitary but divinely girt crusader, would succeed in fulfilling her holy mission, and would punish and purge the Allied Nations of the manifold sins which they were committing at England's behest. England should never rule all the world, as she was aspiring to do.

Pastor Marlow continued:

"In a wonderful volume of poems which have recently come into my hands, and which were written by Pastor Vorwerk, I found a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer which I am going to recite to you, for I am sure that better than any prayer that I could frame it voices the sentiments and convictions of all who are present:

"Though the warrior's bread is scanty, do thou work daily death and tenfold woe unto the enemy. Forgive in merciful long-suffering each bullet and each blow which miss their mark. Lead us not into the temptation of letting our wrath be too tame in carrying out thy divine judgment. Deliver us and our Ally from the infernal enemy and his servants on earth. Thine is the kingdom, the German land; may we, by thy steel-clad hand, achieve the power and the glory. Amen."*

*For the English version of this "prayer" the author is indebted to J. P. Bang's "Hurrah and Hallellujah."

Too revolted for words, Guido rose, and, excusing himself to the other occupants of the pew, walked quickly out of the church. He passed Elschen on his way down the aisle, who looked at him anxiously, thinking him suddenly unwell, so white and strained was his face. He contrived to smile at her and passed on. Apparently she was the only person in the church who had noted his departure. The rest of the congregation sat attentive and intent, mirroring exultant beatitude.

Guido dashed wildly through the baize swinging door of the vestibule into the fresh, clean night-air.

"God!" he exclaimed. "God in heaven! Can such things be! In a Christian church!"

He had entered the church, hoping that words of spiritual cheer would help him to overcome the misery that was gnawing at his heart-strings and the shame which was eating into his marrow.

And he came forth a thousand times more ashamed than he had gone in.

He walked rapidly down the street. He thought he would drop in at the Geddes home, and extract comfort from any member of the family at leisure to entertain him. But it was almost nine o'clock, and in spite of the royal welcome which always awaited him at the Professor's, he felt some hesitation in presenting himself there at so unconventional an hour.

He thought of Stan. But Stan, lucky dog of pure Anglo-Saxon breed, would deal him a resounding slap on the shoulder and tell him to chuck all his German acquaintances indiscriminately, and dismiss the War from his mind and forget he had any foreign blood in his veins.

He thought of Cecil. The English boy, with his ever-ready willingness to talk and to analyze, was never far from Guido's thoughts these days. Was Cecil in danger? Would he come through all right? The thought of Cecil quieted him. The thoughts that disturbed and harrowed him suddenly seemed petty, unreasonable, selfish when compared to the discomforts and dangers which Cecil was undergoing.

He turned to go home, turned abruptly and ran violently into a small, slender man with his Derby low on his brow.

"I beg your pardon," said Guido, drawing back.

"I beg yours," said the other in accents so delicate and shadowy that the harsh monosyllables were unbelievably softened.

Then the two young men stood and smiled at each other sheepishly. They were class-mates and they had spoken once or twice in class, and once or twice had walked a block or two together. Guido had taken what Stan called "a terrific shine" to the young man, and was a little ashamed of the reasons which had held him back from eagerly cultivating his acquaintance.

For the slender young man was a Japanese and his name was Tada Yomanato. Guido, priding himself as he did upon his absence of race prejudice would, if left to himself, have made friends with Yomanato long before. But Otto and Stan were forever at him. Stan, whose parents came from the Coast, had the Californian's ingrained dislike for the yellow races. "The Japs are mere copy-cats," he was in the habit of saying, "and we don't want them in this country." Otto expressed his dislike, the typical German dislike for the Japanese, in terms far more emphatic. Between the two Guido had had a hard time in being decently civil to Yomanato. He argued by the hour both with Stan and Otto, but did not care to risk an open quarrel by inviting Yomanato to his house when the others were there.

Guido broke the embarrassed silence. In after life he often wondered whether chance or destiny—much-hated word—had thrown Yomanato and himself together that evening.

"I have just come out of a church, a Christian church, a German Christian church," said Guido, "and I am ashamed."

The Japanese received this burst of confidence with Oriental immobility.

"Was it the War?" he asked, after a moment.

"Yes," said Guido. "To carry it into the pulpit!" Then, feeling that his indignation had placed him in an oblique position, he added hastily, honestly:

"I am not a Christian. Nevertheless, what I heard to-night was blasphemy, sacrilege—I do not know what to call it."

Tada Yomanato said slowly:

"One does not need to be a Christian to perceive blasphemy." The Japanese spoke slowly, as if speed in speech were impeded by caution in the selection of words. "In my country, at Kamukura, there is a statue of Buddha, Dai Butsu, and on the entrance to the shrine are inscribed words which, to my mind, make plain the nature of blasphemy and sacrilege."

"What are the words?" Guido demanded.

"Pardon," said the Japanese, "but is it well that we should speak of sacred things in this haphazard fashion? Will you not honor me—and come to my rooms?"

"Gladly," said Guido.

Yomanato occupied rooms in an old-fashioned mansion on Maple Street, a secluded, quiet avenue amply provided with the tree for which it was named. Yomanato let himself and Guido in with latch-key, and led the way to a very large front room on the second floor, furnished pleasantly enough with a bed-couch, a morris chair, a wicker rocking chair, a table with an old-fashioned student lamp and other purely Occidental furniture. Yomanato invited Guido to sit, and then, going to the book-case, he pulled out a book.

"I happen to have the words here in English," he explained. "Were I to translate, the language would not be so good." Opening the book he proceeded to read the words of the inscription which he had referred to before:

"O Stranger, whosoever thou art and whatsoever thy creed, when thou enterest this sanctuary, remember that thou treadest upon ground hallowed by the worship of ages. This is the Temple of Buddha and the Gate of the Eternal, and should therefore be entered with reverence."*

Having finished reading the passage, the Japanese gently closed the book and then came and sat down on a chair near Guido.

"If I were to enter a Christian church," he said, "and were to indulge in irreverent or licentious or contemptuous thoughts while there, I should, according to my belief, be guilty of sacrilege. What is sacred to the followers of

*The book referred to from which the translation is taken, is James A. B. Scherer's "Japan of To-day."

one faith should at least command the respect of all believers in whatsoever creeds."

"It should command respect of all men, whether they have a faith or not," said Guido.

"Atheists?" the Japanese inquired, mildly.

"Atheists?" Guido perceived the drift of the question, and admired the shrewdness of the Japanese. He colored and laughed.

"Is an atheist any more honest than a gnostic—or a gnostic than an atheist?"

The Japanese regarded Guido with an utterly immobile face. It occurred to Guido that Yomanato might not know the meaning of "gnostic." It further occurred to him that he might comprehend the word, since his English was marvelously good, and that he might be a gnostic himself. Guido had read much about Buddhism, but he was uncertain as to the manner in which Buddhists classify themselves.

"I hope I haven't dropped a brick," said Guido. "I'm not sure whether Buddhists are gnostics or agnostics."

"Neither am I," said Yomanato, smiling blandly. "Undoubtedly, Buddhism as popularly taught, like certain popular brands of Christianity, is intrinsically a gnostic faith. But the higher Buddhism, to which I aspire, which I hope to understand some day, offers no information as to the beginning of things, as your Scriptures do."

"Then you are a Buddhist?" Guido inquired, unaware that according to his host's standards, he was being unwarrantably rude in asking so leading a question.

Yomanato replied pleasantly:

"My father was a Buddhist. My mother was a follower of Shinto. I myself observe both religions."

"Both?" Guido echoed. "Both?" This was worse than Dobronov, who in his desire to avoid improper classification, at least discarded one faith before embarking on the troubled waters of another.

"Both," Yomanato assured him, smiling so broadly this time that his even, ivory-white teeth showed like two rows of pearls. "I am aware," he said, "that here it is the custom of one religion, or one creed, to discredit other religions and other creeds. Why not combine instead? The essentials of all religions are the same."

"What are the essentials of religion?" Guido inquired, feeling very green and young.

"A pure life, reverence for the Unseen World, honesty toward ourselves and others, avoidance of unclean and lascivious thoughts, kindness to all living creatures. These, I think, are the essentials of religion. Yours, I am sure, contains them as well as does my compound faith."

"I have no faith!" It caused Guido a tremendous effort to heave these words from his lips. He felt humiliated, he could not have said why. "My education was peculiar," he said. "I was supposed to be brought up without a bias. In religion. In everything. I verily believe it was a mere concession to expediency, to the temporal powers vested in government, that I was taught it was wrong to lie and to steal. Come to think of it, I don't believe I was taught even that much. I absorbed by example. I comprehended that nice people didn't do such things. I was given many books to read, books on Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, when I was quite a child. Possibly I learned my moral code from those source-books. I was told that all religions were good and true. I wasn't supposed to be brought up with a bias for any form of government, either. I suppose I couldn't help learning to prefer the democratic form to the monarchical form. At any rate, my love for democracy was bred in the bone. It must have been, for our German teachers were quite as patriotic teutonically as our American teachers were patriotic in their love for America. It was a queer way to bring up a youngster. The only definite lesson I remember receiving at home," Guido concluded, "was to love and revere Washington and Lincoln above all other men."

"Washington! Lincoln!" For one moment the Oriental's terrible immobility vanished. He regained it immediately. "Washington and Lincoln," he said, "were two of the greatest men that ever lived. They teach Japanese children about them. Like Gautama, like Jesus the Christ, like Moses and Confucius they were men who helped make all humanity better and stronger and saner. They were world-saviours. Covetousness is forbidden us, but I transgress when I think of those two men."

"You make me proud to be an American," said Guido, from a desire to be polite to his host's eloquence.

"You may well be proud of your nationality," Yomanato replied, pleasantly. "America has done much for us. She has opened Japan to the benefits of Western civilization. You forced those benefits upon us—at the cannon's mouth. We were afraid to admit strangers to Nippon because of an earlier experience with a Christian power. We were the hermit among nations, more secluded and unapproachable than China. You came, and with your big ships and big guns frightened us out of our former fright. And now, less than half a century later, we stand in the forefront of nations. We fight hand to hand with the white race to save the white race's civilization from a white race which is barbarian at heart."

What man can say what hidden springs lie dormant within him? Guido, champion of the belief in the equality of all races, felt an unaccountable stirring of race prejudice, a strange, primordial, elemental feeling that it behooved him to defend the Germans, because they were a white race, in spite of the infamies which they were perpetrating, against the charge of barbarism made by an Oriental. There was at play within him another, a more subtle and more far-reaching instinct. The Germans were a Christian nation. The Japanese were not. He was not a Christian himself, at least so he declared, with painstaking honesty, whenever opportunity offered. Yet, unconsciously, he aligned himself in defense of the nation that claimed to be Christian, although her hands were red with innocent blood, her heart black with perfidy; although, within the hour he had heard that in a German Christian church which had sent him running out of God's house with unseemly haste.

"I don't want you to think I am defending Germany," he said. "She's acted very badly. But truth is truth. The Germans are not barbarians. They are a highly civilized race."

"Pardon," said Yomanato smoothly, "it was not my intention to offend. I thought you an American."

"I am an American," Guido rejoined, "of German extraction. And I think Germany has acted despicably."

But, as I said before, Germany has attained a very high degree of civilization."

An enigmatic smile appeared on Yomanato's face.

"It is barely possible," he said, "that we differ in the meaning we attach to the word 'civilization.'"

"You of the West," Yomanato continued, "attach much importance to the evolution of mechanics, medicine, architecture, electricity, chemistry and astronomy. We of the East have profited greatly by the inventions and the progress made by the white race. We should be ungrateful to minimize the advantages which this material knowledge bestows. I myself am here in this country to gain material knowledge. But civilization does not consist of these things. They are the exponents, the interpretations of civilization. Civilization is the indwelling—what shall I call it?—the indwelling something, the spiritual essence, the contiguous and indivisible force underlying all these pleasant and agreeable things."

"I think," said Guido, "that is what the Germans mean by 'Kultur.'"

"The great boast of the Germans is their efficiency," Yomanato continued. "Now, efficiency concerns the purely material world, means excellence in the handling of material things. But civilization delves further than that. Civilization, because of its indwelling force, may and does make for outward perfection. But when that outward perfection becomes an end in itself, when it is worshiped for its own sake regardless of the finer, spiritual tendencies to which it is due, and which, *en bloc*, constitute civilization proper, then civilization is endangered. And the greater the externalized perfection, the greater the danger which menaces civilization. For the vulgar confound the two, lose sight of the impalpable spiritual in their delight in the tangible physical."

Guido listened with growing astonishment. He thought of Stan and Otto, of their disdainful estimate of the Japanese. How callow and crude all that seemed now the touchstone of Yomanato's thoughts and conversation were applied to Stan's and Otto's theory of racial inferiority. Also his own belief in the general infallibility of the Anglo-Saxon race was slightly shaken. He was by no means dull, yet he experienced some difficulty in

following Yomanato's philosophic excursion. He had spoken English from childhood, if not from the cradle, but he could not have clothed his thoughts in language as fluent and lucid as that of Yomanato, who had begun to study English barely five years ago.

"I am afraid I am very superficial," Guido said, thoughtfully. "I've never thought of things in that way before."

"You are far from being a sciolist," said Yomanato, and again Guido started. The fellow's vocabulary was staggering. "I have observed you closely. You are different from the rest. But—you are of the West. Pardon. I do not wish to offend. But the genius of the white races and the genius of the yellow races differ. The tendencies which they perpetuate and carry on diverge greatly."

Guido stared. He said nothing. He was entirely at sea.

"You said before," Yomanato continued, "that you had no belief. You are mistaken. You have a belief, but you are unaware of it. It underlies all your doubt and agnosticism. Some great upheaval will bring it across the threshold to you."

"And what," Guido demanded, "will my belief be when it steps across the threshold?"

"Christianity."

"Why not your faith—Buddhism? The Eightfold Path of Virtue is as fine a code as that laid down by the Ten Commandments."

"Ethics do not constitute a religion. Every religion propounds a philosophy. It is in their philosophy that Buddhism and Christianity differ so profoundly. It is because you are of the Occident that I predict you will ultimately embrace Christianity and not Buddhism. Even if you had been educated in Japan, or in India, in a Buddhist household, you would probably turn to Christianity the moment you became acquainted with it. A gosling takes to water you know, a chick to land."

"I'll be blessed if I know what you are talking about," said Guido.

"Which further proves my contention," said Yomanato, with a smile.

Guido felt subtly annoyed. It was exasperating to have Yomanato dispose of him with this philosophic, dispas-

sionate, godlike calm. Yet in no way had Yomanato insinuated that Christianity was inferior to Buddhism, or that the white races were inferior to the yellow. The very distinct impression he did make, by what subtle channels Guido could not have said, was that of an adult addressing a little child, and humoring it, and teasing it ever so little. Asia, cradle of the human race, mother of Europe, grandmother of America, was smilingly admitting her offspring's progressiveness, conquest of the material world, general abreastness of the times. To please her offspring she was falling in with its ways. Yet all the while she wore a smile—the strange, calm, benignant, baffling smile of Buddha, proclaiming anew the age-old truth that knowledge is not wisdom, that accomplishment is not achievement, that mastery is not comprehension, that science is not civilization.

"Won't you deign to explain what you mean?" Guido said.

"With pleasure. I think you will embrace Christianity because, being of the Occident, you are highly individualized. Christianity is an individualized religion, the religion of individuals and of individualization."

Guido stared. He did not comprehend. Was Japan not highly individualized as a people?

"Not in your sense."

"My sense? Our sense? I'm dreadfully stupid, I'm afraid."

"I fear I can explain no further," said Yomanato.

Something in his manner inhibited Guido from pressing his request. The youngest scion had been humored long enough by its granddame. "So far," said the granddame, "and no further. When you have lived as long as I have, you may hope to begin to comprehend the things that are worth while. Meanwhile you are young, almost infantile, and you have a young, almost an infantile religion adapted to your needs. Be content and wait. Youth has many gifts. It should not grudge old age its one inalienable possession—wisdom."

After a few moments of silence, Yomanato said:

"I am sorry I cannot be more explicit. Perhaps it will help you if I say that one's particular faith is merely a matter of temperament. The ethics of virtually all real

religions are the same; thus the individual turns naturally to the religion capable of affording him the greatest spiritual support and solace. That, in part, was what I meant when I said you would ultimately embrace Christianity."

"That's rather an utilitarian view of religion, isn't it?" Guido said rather than asked.

A strange gleam, as of intense pleasure, came into the Japanese's eyes.

"Is the Christian faith not wholly utilitarian?" he demanded. "The salvation of the individual soul is, as I understand, Christianity's avowed purpose."

These simple words made a very remarkable impression upon Guido. His thoughts seemed to reach out in a myriad directions at one time. Uncognizable thoughts seemed to hover on the brink of consciousness and draw back when finite thought sprang forward to meet them. It was a moment such as he had never experienced before, a moment, which, had the Japanese not been unwilling to pursue the subject, might have initiated Guido into a spiritual realm of which, as yet, he had no conception. But Yomanato very evidently was unwilling to say more, and the legion of reflections suggested to Guido by Yomanato's words slipped back into the chasm of unconscious thought until a new stimulus should revivify them.

Guido asked, after a considerable pause:

"At the risk of giving offense, I would like to ask you why you are withholding that which you are withholding?"

Yomanato regarded Guido, a crystallized smile on his lips. Guido had yet to learn that this particular smile masked emotions as turbulent and as eager as any which stirred the heart of the most high-strung Occidental. He had also to learn that that smiling mask was the outcome of Japanese etiquette and prescribed by it.

When the Japanese finally answered, it was in smooth, flute-like tone.

"I will tell why I am withholding that which I am withholding," he said. "If my words seem vague and shadowy, I beg you not to press me to be definite. My father, as a young man, worked for a Japanese firm in New York for a period of eight years. Through him I learned much of Occidental life, religions, traditions and thought. Since

I was fourteen years old I have cherished a hope, a wonderful hope, which embraces the East and West. It concerns them conjointly.

"I must not tell you more about that hope excepting only this: that it will be given to some Occidental to see things as I see them. That I shall take as a sign. More than that I cannot say."

Guido bent forward eagerly.

"You wish me to divine what this secret wish of yours is so that I may share it?" he asked.

"I would like to put it a little differently. I would like you to arrive at the same conclusions as myself unaided by anything I may say. The facts are open to all. But if there is truth in my idea, if it is something more than the dream of an Oriental visionary, it will, it must occur to an Occidental as well as to myself. Therefore my lips are sealed. You must arrive at the same goal as myself uninfluenced, and without bias."

Guido rose abruptly and began walking the floor with ferocious strides. Were all the powers of darkness leagued against him? Always the same cry—no bias. Apparently every sentient being in the world was permitted a bias save only himself.

"The peculiar education which you have enjoyed and of which you told me just now," Yomanato continued, "should be an admirable preparation for——"

Guido interrupted him furiously.

"No bias," he cried, "no bias! You were brought up with a bias, weren't you? Why was I alone among men denied the privilege of a religious faith? The privilege of being furnished with a ready-made staff and support?"

Yomanato's smile broadened, became more human.

"When you have found the particular staff that suits your temperament," he said, "you will think differently. You will realize that much is to be said in favor of no bias. Meanwhile,"—Guido was still marching up and down the room—"I beg your pardon in advance, but would you mind very much reseating yourself? The mother of my landlady occupies the apartment under us and she is ill."

Guido plumped himself back in his chair. Would he never learn to overcome the habit of promenading about noisily late at night?

"I beg your pardon a thousand times," he said.

"In a way," Yomanato continued, "my education was similar to yours. My father, if he had lived, I think would have embraced Christianity. I heard as much about Jesus in my home as about Buddha."

"You told me before that you followed both Shinto and Buddhism," Guido said, a little ironically. "It is not impossible, I suppose, that you will some day embrace Christianity as well."

"It is not impossible," said Yomanato with his inscrutable smile.

The two young men talked until midnight. They talked of many things besides religion. Yomanato, who seemed remarkably well informed, spoke of the literature and art of Japan, of her social customs, home-life, traditions. Guido, when he finally put out his hand to bid his host good-night, felt not only that he had made a friend but that he had paid a flying visit to Nippon and that it had been well worth while.

Stan and Otto notwithstanding.

And Stan, we may be sure, baited and plagued and teased Guido upon his new acquisition. Were the Japs included in the great Race Equality Theory? Didn't they, self-confessedly, owe everything they knew to the Occident? Literature? Art? Surely no one could take Japanese painting seriously. Their wood-carving and all that was well enough, but art alone neither made nor advanced civilization.

At this point Guido said savagely:

"Stan, you are a barbarian. A vandal. The Japs had a civilization of their own, a highly developed civilization when Europe, not to speak of America, was in its swaddling clothes."

"Whew," Stan laughed, "upon my word, you really like the fellow."

"I really do."

"Niggers will be next, I suppose, to enter your family of Equal Races."

Guido bit his lip.

"Pity there isn't a nigger in our class to fraternize with," Al Dalton, a boy from Alabama, threw in. "You'd make friends with him, too, wouldn't you, Guy?"

"You'll be drubbed if you don't," said Stan.

"Drubbed? Oh, my stars. By whom? You?" Otto's stalwart form towered a good half-foot above Stan's Gibson-like figure, which seemed to betoken elegance rather than strength. He laughed easily, almost good-naturedly.

"It's only fair," said Stan, "to tell you I've been learning how to box and how to wrestle."

"Are you threatening me?"

"Yum-yum," said Stan, which syllables of obscure meaning seemed to infuriate Otto incredibly.

"We'll fight it out on the football grounds," said Otto shortly.

"Oh, gee," said Dalton, "if you knock out my German tutor, Stan, I'll flunk again as sure as God made little apples. That beastly German Accusative."

"Don't worry," said Otto grimly, "he won't knock me out."

And yet, after all, Stan did knock Otto out. Otto had the superior weight but Stan had science. Otto rushed again and again upon Stan's slim-looking fist, and again and again came away, bruised, smarting with pain and with the sense of impending defeat. Then, a quick wrench, a quick twist of the wrist on Stan's part, and Otto's Herculean form swung violently through the air and with a resounding thud thwacked down upon the frozen earth. For a moment he lay stunned, and Guido experienced a horrid sensation in the lower region of the abdomen, and, in spite of the stress of the moment he found time to reflect that this extraordinary sense of physical nausea explained the old English expression "to have no bowels," which until that moment he had considered an inelegant survival from days when human beings quartered other human beings and brutality of language ran parallel with brutality of conduct.

Otto came to in time and was set on his feet by Stan and Al Dalton, who, all the while bitterly lamented that there would be no lesson in German that day. Stan and Otto shook hands warmly. The hatchet between them was buried. Otto was badly bruised and his nose was bleeding profusely. Stan supplied him with an extra handkerchief and the faithful Dalton helped his tutor and his hero home. Otto declined the proffer of Guido's arm. Guido, while the

hatless, coatless, a young giant in stature, books tucked under his arm, whistling lustily.

"There comes my German tutor," said Dalton, "just look at him, look at him. Wouldn't it turn you green with envy? The muscle that fellow has is tremendous."

Otto, unfortunately, was in one of his most iniquitous war-moods. He began lauding the marvelous prowess of the Germans, declaimed violently against England and concluded with a bitter arraignment of President Wilson.

"Issues a Prayer-for-Peace-Proclamation and allows ammunition to be sent abroad," he cried. "If he were sincere in his desire for peace, wouldn't he help bring it about by placing an embargo on the shipment of ammunition? He's an arch-hypocrite. He and Grey are the prototypes of all hypocrisies—he has it in his face—anyhow."

"Anyhow—has he?" Stan's eyes were not good to look at. "Look here, Baumgarten, I don't quite like that last remark of yours. It was too personal. Supposing you modify it."

"Modify nothing," said Otto, stoutly. "He's got it in his face. Lying, canting hypocrite."

"I advise you once more to retract that statement," Stan repeated. "Much as I disapprove of Billy Hohenzollern, I would never call him the names I think he deserves in your presence because I'd hate to hurt your feelings. You are an American and you are living in this country and so am I. And if you don't retract there'll be trouble."

"Well, I won't retract," said Otto, doggedly. "That fakir in the White House is just what I said he was. Anyhow, you can't expect the same consideration to be shown a President as an Emperor."

"Say, you don't belong here," said Stan.

"Oh, cut it out," said Otto gruffly. "I didn't know you were a Democrat."

"I'm not," said Stan. "Our family has been black Republican since the year one. But that doesn't affect my position in the least. In times like these I do not choose to hear the President spoken of in language as scurrilous as that employed by yourself. Even if he were not the great statesman he is."

"Well, I won't eat my own words," said Otto. "I'll be hanged if I do."

"You'll be drubbed if you don't," said Stan.

"Drubbed? Oh, my stars. By whom? You?" Otto's stalwart form towered a good half-foot above Stan's Gibson-like figure, which seemed to betoken elegance rather than strength. He laughed easily, almost good-naturedly.

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others were trying to get Otto his feet, had been mopping the sweat and the blood from his face. His face was quite as white as Otto's, and Otto said, briefly:

"I'm all right, Guido. Don't worry. Look after yourself."

Guido winced. The kindness, the lack of resentment which Otto was showing made him vow that never again, War or no War, would he quarrel with Otto.

"You know," Stan said, after Dalton and Otto were gone, "I hated to do it. Baumgarten is such an awfully decent sort. And he certainly took his punishment like a man."

"Otto's fine," Guido said briefly. "What gets me—and I can't get over it—is how he can be a pro."

"That's what makes war," said Stan.

"By the way, I thought you didn't care a fig about the War," Guido commented, dispassionately.

"Oh, h—l," Stan rejoined, "I'm a raving lunatic about this little old War. What's the use of mouthing it if one cannot go and fight? I've plagued the life out of the folks at home, I want to go so badly. The Guv'nor is set against it on principle. So long as we are not in it he thinks Americans ought to keep away, excepting for Red Cross work. He says my life is not my own to offer another country at so critical a time. It belongs to Uncle Sam. I've got the Guv'nor's promise, though, not to oppose my enlisting as soon as we're in the War. Darned little I'd care for his permission if I were of age. If for nothing else, I'd like to see the boches at close range. One can't help wondering just what has struck 'em all to make 'em cut the capers they're going through."

"Cecil said," Guido rejoined, "that the Germans have gone morally insane."

"The Guv'nor says they're in a state of moral under-development. As a nation—not individuals, of course. Like the South at the time of the Civil War. I suppose you know that Dalton still thinks slavery was a divine institution."

"How can he?"

"Thinks the negro rather than the South was wronged by the abolition of Slavery."

"Ye gods!" Then, after a pause Guido added:

"I suppose, as you remarked before, it's that that makes modern wars—when two sovereign people or large national units disagree as to the morality of a thing."

"Sounds good to me," said Stan in his offhand way.

"You know," said Guido, "the South, in some ways, misbehaved in much the same way that Germany is misbehaving now. Germany feels no compunction in shooting down innocent civilians by the hundreds because some poor crazed devil gets to sniping at a German soldier. I told Otto the other day that all our famous minute men were nothing but a lot of snipers."

"Proceed," said Stan. He was grinning broadly.

"The South refused to treat negro soldiers as captives. They were treated as animals who had attacked their owners. At Fort Pillow three hundred Union soldiers were butchered in cold blood because they were colored men. The Confederacy went so far as to threaten that commissioned officers of the North employed in drilling and instructing negroes as soldiers, would, if captured, not be treated as prisoners of war, but as ordinary felons."

"How do you manage to remember all that?" Stan inquired.

"You know," said Guido, "remembering that sort of thing makes one hopeful for the future. At present one's so apt to think that Germans have placed themselves outside the pale of civilization for good. Parallels of that sort make one feel there is hope—even for Germany. There's one point and one only which I think the Germans are partially justified in making against us. Though I wouldn't admit it for worlds in speaking to Otto. Ammunition."

"We are right according to international law," said Stan.

"Yes, but are we right ethically, humanly?"

"There are lots of people who haven't a drop of German blood who feel the way you do," said Stan. The matter does. But, look here. Our sympathy is all with the Allies. It would be unnatural, wouldn't it, that being so, if we were not to avail ourselves of the right to send them ammunition allowed us by international law?"

"Yes," said Guido. "Nevertheless, I can't help worrying about that ammunition business. I'm not questioning our legal right. I suppose there is some deeper reason for

it which we fail to apprehend. But, are we right morally? Humanly? Ethically? I'm even willing to concede that we are right humanly. But ethically?"

"Isn't humanly and ethically the same?"

"I think not. If I give a murderer who is dying shelter and hide him from the police, I am humanly right. I am ethically wrong because in allowing compassion to supersede justice I am helping to let justice miscarry."

"What in heaven's name are you trying to do?" Stan demanded. "Are you squaring the circle?"

"No, I'm sticking to Euclid closer than that. I'm trying to find out whether the three angles of an equilateral triangle are really equal. My dilemma arises from the fact that I don't know which angle is to serve as the standard."

"Well," said Stan, as they parted at his door, "I don't mind telling you, Guy, that you have a head on your shoulders. I'd trade my physique against yours any day if I could get your strong memory along with your weak back."

Guido flushed a dull brick-red.

"Are you stringing me?" he demanded.

"Stringing!" Stan laughed. "My dear chap, s'long!"

CHAPTER XII

GUIDO'S sorrows, it will be observed, were multiplying. The U-boats, Cæsar Borgias of the sea, were outvying each other in wanton brutal destructiveness, and thus a new and—so far as America was concerned—greater issue of the War was broached. Tales were being told of incredible barbarity both at sea and on land. The murdering of civilians, the burning of villages, the bombing of unfortified towns continued; and added to all these horrors was the new sea-terror.

Guido, like many an unhyphenated American, still clung to the fantastic hope that these tales were grimly exaggerated. Germany was wrong, dead wrong politically, but that was no reason why every German should have turned himself into a robber and pirate. But this hope, dimsy from the start, soon became as tenuous as air.

The Bryce report placed Germany in so damnable a light that the continued efforts to whitewash her on the part of her sworn partisans would have been laughable if the issues involved had been less tragic and far-reaching.

There was, moreover, a detail which eloquently proclaimed Germany's guilt and the guilt of Germans as well as of Germany, a detail which corresponded to the internal evidence which is so highly esteemed by seekers after truth in literary fields. The Germans in the United States not merely remained pro-German in face of the uncontrovertible evidence of the Bryce report, not merely continued their irrational, insensate tirades against England, not merely continued to berate all who condemned Germany, calling them knaves, idiots and liars, not merely tried to turn the sword of truth aside with the ancient slogan "English lies"; but, lulled into security by America's strange tolerance of their intolerance, their hypocrisy and their blood-guilt, they now began to boast and brag of Germany's exploits, to hold up for emulation her detestable, soulless, machine-like, overdisciplined efficiency.

Women as well as men gloated over the vision of towns sacked and pillaged and looted, and licked their chops greedily in ghoulis anticipation of the thirty-five million Marks which the Germans intended to wring out of exsanguined and eviscerated Belgium—blood-money as ghastlily sinister as Judas Iscariot's thirty pieces of silver. They smiled wickedly on hearing that Belgians were being deported to Germany. Belgians were notoriously lazy—the lesson of enforced labor would do them good. One German woman—a lady she termed herself and would have been termed by others by every token of habiliment, speech and appearance—was heard to remark that there wasn't a virtuous woman in all Belgium, and the raping of Belgium women, therefore, was not a crime.

The pro-Germans of America, in brief, were following the lead given them by the German government which, to check the outbreak of American indignation on Belgium's behalf, was circulating a wild story of documents found in the Belgian archives which, they claimed, were detrimental to German security. This tale, a German fabrication, of course, was intended to undermine Belgian honor and to corroborate Germany's preposterous accusation that the Triple Alliance had entered into a conspiracy to dismember Germany. Belgium, this story further affirmed, when the time was ripe, had promised to allow the British and the French to walk through Belgium into Germany.

Having disemboweled Belgium first, Germany then defamed her, thus placing herself in the identical position of a man who, having raped a woman, assails her good name to minimize his own crime.

The pro-Germans avidly seized upon this wild yarn. It did not trouble them in the least that Germany, being a bankrupt in truthfulness, could not gain credence for so grotesque a tale unsupported by the word of a veracious power.

The evidence against Germany, in brief, was now so plain as to be unmistakable to all excepting the willfully blind. But the number of those German-Americans who refused to believe the sworn statements of reliable witnesses, and to listen to the voice of conscience, remained appallingly large. Bound by the strongest and the most ignoble fetters conceivable—race prejudice, tribal arrogance

and a wicked pride—they persisted in their hatred and mercilessness for all peoples not German.

It was no longer possible, Guido thought—unjustly perhaps—to discriminate narrowly between conscious knaves and unconscious dupes. The two classes of pro-Germans seemed now to overlap, to intermingle and to intertwine.

The perverted ethical sense of the Germans now stood out with startling distinctness.

Eddie Erdman, on hearing of the enormous sum expended by England in fitting out a castle in the north of England for German officers taken as prisoners of war, laughed contemptuously.

“English hypocrisy, of course,” he said. “England publishes the story of her magnanimity in order to blind silly fools like the Americans to her part in the making of the War.” And when his attention was called to the stories of German cruelty to their prisoners of war, he exclaimed: “Intelligent Germans do not believe every slander they hear, especially as the story comes through enemy channels. The German cables were cut for a reason, you know.”

It was precisely this dishonest, covert way of meeting accusation which seemed to offer indubitable proof that the amazing obtuseness of the average German-American was largely an assumed and not a natural disability.

But the German-American methods of argument did not always partake of indirection. They were at times quite childishly, marvelously direct and unashamed.

It was an old lady famed throughout the county for her benevolence and integrity who exclaimed, on hearing of the sinking by U-boats of three merchantmen in one day at a time when the horror of the scientific piracy inaugurated by the Germans was still wearing all its young verdure: “Amazing! What other nation could do the same?” A delicious bit of unconscious irony which could not have been bettered by Swift.

It was a youngish man, a man not merely of probity, of honor but of splendid, red-corpuscled kindness in every private relation of life who, on hearing of the German ill-treatment of prisoners, said:

“All this fuss is ridiculous. War is inhuman. Everybody knows that. But why the life of a man whom it was the duty of Germans to kill or injure while at large should,

through the mere condition of his being taken captive, became sacred, I cannot see."

This sort of thing was not merely incomprehensible, it was baffling. Guido, on hearing of these sayings, was struck by their intrinsic unmorality. It brought home to him anew the charge which was beginning to be made by intelligent people: the German mind was not as other minds. It was in a class by itself. Its conclusions, logically and correctly deduced were false and unmoral because deduced from false and unmoral premises. Their entire argumentation savored of what Macaulay, in a pregnant phrase, termed "the legerdemain of sophistry."

The pro-Germans seemed bent upon exterminating all saner emotions in themselves as ruthlessly as they advocated the extermination of their enemies.

Envy, too, masquerading as justice, underlay much of the pro-German sympathy.

"Germany should have an empire as great as England's," said Dr. Erdman. "She is entitled to it."

"Is that why Germany went to war?" Guido inquired.

"Not at all. Of course Germany wants her place in the sun. But principally Germany wants the freedom of the seas."

"But the seas are free, or were, until the submarines began to ply their nefarious trade," Guido rejoined.

"Were they? I think not. England, with her enormous fleet can at any time blockade any part of the world she chooses to blockade."

"But England has never made arbitrary use of this power," Guido demurred, "any more than we would think of barring vessels from the Panama Canal without cause."

"But England's power exists and this is sufficient to make the seas unfree," Dr. Erdman persisted. "It is intolerable."

"Look here, Doc," said Guido, "American Common Law, like English Common Law, assumes a man to be innocent until he is proven guilty. The Germans and Austrians, I understand, reverse that and assume that a suspect is guilty until he has proven himself innocent. Now, that answers your argument, I think. And that also is one of the invisible bonds which unite England and the U. S. A.—one of the bonds which Germans deliberately ignore."

Dr. Erdman laughed. He and Guido had met in front of his home, where they were still standing while this conversation took place. Otto, passing on some errand, joined them.

"Well, don't feel so bad, Guido," Dr. Erdman said. "If the quarrel were between our country and Germany, or were to shift around to include us, we would, of course, side with the U. S. A. and fight under the Stars and Stripes."

It was the same old imbecile asseveration which Guido had heard so often before. And this from a man of exceptional mental endowments and blameless integrity.

Otto, for the first time, put in his oar.

"And all this hollering about the hospital ship which the Germans sunk the other day!" he exclaimed.

"They sunk it, of course, because they suspected that the English had been using it as a transport," said Dr. Erdman.

"But not on that particular trip," Guido exclaimed. "It was homeward bound from France."

"Well," said Otto, "they probably had been using it as a transport and would have done so again. So where's the odds?"

"There were wounded men on board, Otto," said Dr. Erdman. "It was—in spite of the fact that the Germans were technically right—a despicable thing to do."

Otto shrugged his shoulders. He, too, evidently did not see that captivity or being wounded should assure a former enemy certain humane privileges.

Dr. Erdman smiled subtly.

"Perhaps," he said, "if you were a physician, Otto, you would understand."

All Guido's anger against Dr. Erdman vanished in a moment. Surely, there was still hope of *his* conversion.

"Well," Otto grumbled, "I may be very inhumane, but I cannot see that it's any less inhumane to sink a ship with say five hundred men, not damaged, who are going to war, than to sink a ship with five hundred men, injured, but not beyond hope of recovery, men, who once they are back on the battlefield may kill off a thousand of your own men. All this mawkish sentimentality, it seems to me, is incompatible with the spirit of war."

"You are not aware, it seems," said Guido, "that Frederick the Great, unscrupulous as he was in breaking treaties and helping himself to other people's territory, admonished his soldiers to show clemency to the vanquished enemy."

Otto looked uncomfortable.

"You're not a bit chivalrous, Otto," said Dr. Erdman.

"By the way, there is no word in German for 'chivalry,'" said Guido. "Sociologists point out that the conception of a moral or mental attribute must precede its name in the national consciousness. So, from the fact that the German language is destitute of the word 'chivalry,' we can draw our own conclusions."

Otto became violently angry, and, as usual when angry, the hobble-de-hoy, childishly futile Otto came to the fore.

"You think you're real smart with all that highbrow stuff you are forever reeling off," he said. "You make me sick. You ought to be ashamed."

"Guido's right, though," Dr. Erdman interrupted, in his gentle way. "At least as far as his sociological comments are concerned. I'm no German scholar. Is there really no word in German for 'chivalry?'"

"Of course there is," Otto grumbled, indignantly. "It's—it's—I don't seem remember. But I'm sure——"

"If you will take the trouble to consult the dictionary, Otto," Guido said, pleasantly, "you will find that *Ritterlichkeit* is given as the German equivalent of 'chivalry.' But, if you have a fine sense for delicate shades of meaning, you will know that it is not just the same."

"But if the dictionary says so, it's so," said Otto, dogmatically.

Dr. Erdman and Guido exchanged glances, and both laughed. This further infuriated Otto. To avoid further argument, Guido said:

"I must be going."

"Wait," said Otto, "I'll go with you."

"I'm not going in your direction," said Guido, quickly.

"And which is my direction?" Otto inquired, suspiciously.

"Opposite to mine," said Guido. Guido and Dr. Erdman were both laughing again, and after a moment, Otto laughed also.

"Oh, well," he said, "I suppose we would only go on bickering."

As has been pointed out before, Bismarck Street possessed the peculiarity, pleasant or otherwise that, on a bright afternoon, no Anasquitoian might traverse it without encountering at least half a dozen acquaintances. Guido, a block further down, encountered the *Theaterdirektorin*, whom he had not seen since the day of the coffee—and the kiss.

He blushed.

The lady, eyes alight with mischief, halted him.

"*Ei, schau, mein junger Herr von Estritz!* Where have you been keeping yourself, Little One? Why did you not come to see me?"

"Did you expect me to come?" Guido questioned.

"To admit that would be to admit disappointment in your not coming."

"You didn't invite me," said the lad, for lack of something to say.

"*Schau, schau*, did you need to be invited?" the lady smiled roguishly, coquettishly. "Let me tell you something, my dear little lad. A kiss would have been construed as an invitation—as an invitation by most young men. This much more I'll whisper to you. You are of the stuff that heart-breakers are made of, *suesser, kleiner Bub*. You have the *beaux yeux*. One shouldn't use the enemy's language, I know, but French is so delicious, so naughty, so suggestive, *nich wahr?* Also, *liebes Zuckerbuebchen*, come and see me soon. Not afraid, are you?"

"What should I be afraid of?" Guido inquired. He had changed color half a dozen times during the lady's peroration. Her use of the familiar "thou" had all but undermined his self-possession. He was half-pleased, half-angry.

"Of what should you be afraid? Of what? *Du lieber Gott im Himmel?* Of what do you suppose?"

"I'm afraid of nothing," said Guido, feeling that he was making an utter fool of himself.

"That's right, Little One. A valiant heart for so handsome a lad. Some men fear the sword, others the bullet, some the bayonet, and some fear ghosts. And some, incredible as it may seem, fear kisses. Kisses!! Such gentle and soft things. *Mein kleiner Zuckerbub* is valorous, I'm

sure, as he declares himself to be. Come and see me soon, *Kleiner*."

Curious emotions flooded Guido. He lifted his hat to the lady and passed on. All she had said, of course, was horribly improper and bold. But—the cursed charm of the language! He did not stop to reflect that English, manipulated by an unscrupulous woman, might develop a similar demoniacal magic. He blamed the poor German tongue. He was oppressed by the sense that, after all, witchcraft was not as defunct as it was supposed to be. He longed for things clean, buoyant and yes—American.

Stan was not at home. So he trudged back to Chestnut Street, and dropped the gilt knocker clamorously against the white door of the Geddes home.

Janet answered the bell.

"Hello," she said.

"Hello," said the boy.

"It's a glorious day."

He assented, but his eyes told her that he knew of something far more glorious than the day.

"Guido!"

"Well?"

"Guido, it's too nice to stay indoors. Let's go for a walk, a long walk. It's not yet four. Let's go to New York."

The idea of going to New York without any particular errand to take one there was new to him, but he welcomed it. It was distinctly not Anasquitoian.

On their way to the ferry Janet amused him with comments on the town which were as shrewd as they were humorous. She had, it seemed, discovered the social cult in which all Anasquitoians, rich or poor, young or old, sick or well, joined. She had discovered the oppressive shibboleth which lay like a heavy hand upon the town and its inhabitants and its merchants and its publicans and the stranger within its gates. She had discovered the significance of Bismarck Street. Her mother, on remonstrating with the coal-dealer upon the quality of the coal, had been told that he had a larger Bismarck Street custom than any other dealer. And the Italian vegetable vender, when Janet had objected to the quality of some fruit which he showed her, assured her that only that morning

had he sent the same quality of fruit to folks living on Bismarck Street. And the paper-hanger, when Mrs. Geddes objected to a garish design, expressed his amazement that anyone should find fault with a paper which he had used for at least four Bismarck Street houses. The venders who supplied the Fauburg St. Germain, or Mayfair, or our own Fifth Avenue, could not possibly take a greater pride in their custom than did the baker, the butcher and candlestick-maker who supplied Bismarck Street.

They had reached the ferry by this time, and had stationed themselves in the foremost corner of the boat formed by the railing and the balustrade, securing thus a privacy similar to that of the ostrich, which, plunging its head into the sand, believes that it has solved the mystery of invisibility.

"And so," said Guido, "I suppose you will be wanting to move to Bismarck Street?"

Janet punished him with a look.

"I'll never be wanting to move to a street named for the man who, Daddy thinks, made this War—or laid the foundations for it," she said. "Besides, I'll be wanting to move to New York. I say it frankly, I do not like Anasquoit."

Guido felt proud of sharing a desire with Janet. He, too, longed to live in New York.

"What other objection to Anasquoit?" he inquired.

"It's a German town. As German as if it belonged to Germany. I feel I may wake up some morning and see the German flag floating from flagstaffs and windows. It's hateful of me, I know, but I do not like Germans as much as I used to."

"Neither do I," said Guido, feelingly. They looked at each other, filled with a sort of rapture at discovering this new spiritual bond.

"I cannot quite explain the feeling," said Guido, and then, with the inconsistency of youth, he proceeded to do so.

"When I like a German now-a-days, I feel as if I were doing something unethical."

"So do I," said Janet.

"And when I don't like a German just because he is a German, I feel unethical, too."

"So do I," said the girl.

"And I don't want to quarrel about the War. But when I refrain from quarreling, I feel as if, in some way, I were conniving in their crimes."

"So do I, so do I."

"And so I've come to the conclusion that I'll avoid them as much as possible."

"Pre-zactly, pre-zactly," cried Guido's chorus, and was on the point of clapping her hands, but recollected in time that she was in a public conveyance.

And so, in the most amiable and harmonious frame of mind possible, Guido and Janet, after leaving the Cross-town car at Fifth Avenue, started upon their ramble. They were radiantly, ridiculously happy. Their walk up Fifth Avenue constituted a magnificent adventure. Guido had walked up and down the great artery of the city more than once, but, under the guidance of Janet's alert eyes, he developed powers of observation which surprised himself. Everything seemed dewily new. The smartly-gowned women, the rich-looking automobiles, the footmen and doormen standing under the awninged and carpeted aisles leading to the doors of the great shops—for the mild, opaline skies of March had shed a few wanton tears a little earlier in the day—as if a wedding or a reception instead of a mere flux of customers were in progress.

The shops, perhaps, were the most wonderful phenomena of all. The window displays, conveying that sense of the inevitable which is the highest reach of art, seemed like creations of nature rather than of man. Whether hung with carpets, or set with Chippendale furniture or occupied by waxen ladies in evening gowns or bathing suits which seemed fit only for stage wear, these window displays seemed indeed, to be the stage-setting for some society play, awaiting the rise of the curtain.

Guido's imagination took fire. He began to people the drawing-rooms and the dining-rooms and the libraries with figures of men and women, knaves, clergymen, artists, servants, children. One of the waxen beauties suddenly became endowed with factitious life and her image lingered

on the retina of Guido's memory long after he had passed her, lingered, resisting effacement by other images which beat upon his eye, clamoring, like Galatea, for the gift of real life with its investiture of pain and sorrow and joy.

Never had Guido felt so exhilarated. He glanced at Janet. She, too, he could see, was in a state of repressed excitement, as if the prodigious complexity of the life which ebbed and flowed about them, beating against the portals within which was comprised her own sentiency, were flooding her with a new vigor and an additional sense.

Guido felt as if something mysteriously magnificent had happened to him, as if life had been transmuted into a gift transcending in wonder all dreams of poets and visions of seers.

Love trembled and quivered between them, touched now this chord in her heart, now that chord in his soul, foreshadowing the glory and the marvel that was to be. But it did not strike the entire gamut of chords that make of life an enchanted garden and of the heart a shining jewel beautiful beyond compare. They were both too young for that tremendous, that all-embracing, all-pervading experience.

They walked as far as the Public Library, silently admiring its heroic stature so admirably proportioned to the space which it occupied. Like an exquisite, huge casket it lay there in the mellow, mother-or-pearl-tinted light of that balmy March afternoon, a casket shrewdly fashioned and beautifully tooled to hold gems of exceeding worth.

Suddenly Guido became aware of a slender young man walking leisurely down the broad flight of shallow steps with an indescribable air of consciously enriching the stairway by traversing it. The young man was Egon von Dammer, and he had seen Guido. Having reached street level, he strolled forward casually to meet them.

Egon stood and talked with Guido and Janet for ten minutes or more. All this time he stood with his hat delicately poised between forefinger and thumb, wearing the air of the thoroughbred who desires that all men shall know him as such.

Guido's feelings ran riot in watching Egon. He admired him and he envied him. It was not so much what

he said but the way in which he said it, the deferential air with which he listened to Janet, the peculiar effect he obtained by gently inclining his head whenever Janet spoke as if fearful of losing a syllable of her words. And Janet was impressed by Egon's manner. There was no denying it. Guido was not yet aware that he loved Janet. But the possessive instincts of the male responded inevitably to the strain that was being put upon them. He wanted to extirpate this other masculine creature who had eclipsed him—as he thought—in the eyes of the girl at his side. It was the old, elemental, primordial instinct of the male to fight every other male not for the sake of *the* woman, but for the sake of Woman.

Guido's bad moment passed, passed because he saw that Janet's bedazzlement was passing. Accustomed to observe delicate shades, Guido perceived that Janet was now quietly taking Egon's measure even while she bandied conventional phrases with him about the weather, the Library, about futile nothings. Presently, however, Egon's words assumed point and direction. It became evident that he wanted Janet to invite him to call. It became just as evident that Janet had no intention of asking him to call. They sparred, parried, dodged and fenced. Janet half a dozen times approached the very verge of rudeness in withholding the invitation, but somehow, with a laugh or a jest, she contrived to brush away the offense as quickly as it was given.

To be game is the first requisite of the thoroughbred. Egon possessed this attribute. He showed no ill-temper at having failed to extract the invitation from Janet, when he finally turned away to ask Guido to spend the evening at his hotel the following Saturday.

"No cards," he added, "unless by unanimous consent."

Guido did not want to go, but he was less dexterous than Janet in his efforts to resist Egon. He finally succumbed to Egon's persistence and accepted.

"Why did you accept when you don't want to go?" Janet demanded, with characteristic directness, when they were alone once more.

"How do you know I don't want to go?"

"Yankee. By your manner, of course. You are very easy to read."

"I am, am I? Well, I couldn't get out of it, could I?"

"Well, if he ever asks you to bring him along to our house, please get out of it."

"Why, Janet," Guido spoke in a shocked voice, "I'd never think of bringing a friend to your house without your or your mother's express invitation."

"That's very silly. Your friend is my friend, and therefore is welcome. Excepting *him*. How annoyed you look, Guido. Does no one ever come to your house without a formal invitation, just brought by a friend?"

"Why, no."

"Well, then, you're insufficiently americanized. Live and learn. Excepting to a formal dinner, you are at liberty any time to come unannounced and to take pot luck and bring along with you any friend whom you have happened to pick up *en route*. Always excepting the friend with the semi-profane name."

"You and your father are forever telling me I'm insufficiently americanized," Guido retorted, showing considerable annoyance. "Am I really as bad as all that?"

"Well, Guido, at times you are not like an American at all. You are stiff and poky, like a European. And that's the truth."

"Like a German, I suppose you mean," said Guido miserably. "Now you won't like me any more."

Janet, out of deference for Fifth Avenue, checked the laughter which was threatening to inundate her.

"I like you so well," she said, "that I am going to give you a sound piece of advice, whether you like my doing so or not."

"Well?"

"In your place, I'd have as little to do with Mr. Profanity as possible."

"But I thought you were impressed by him," Guido said, tactlessly.

"I was, for just five minutes," Janet replied, without flinching. "And then I perceived the shrewd, hard craftiness of his eyes, the curious, hard lines about his mouth. He can't be any older than you, but he looks as if he knew a lot about—well, a lot about the things you and I don't want to know anything about. And I felt, all of a sudden, that he is unscrupulous, insincere and forgive me

—not nice.” “Not nice,” as Guido knew, was in Janet’s phraseology the equivalent of “immoral.” “I know he’s the chap to whom you consider yourself indebted for the scholarship—nevertheless, in your place, I would have as little to do with him as possible.”

“Stan feels the same way about him,” said Guido.

“Stan is a nice boy and a sincere friend,” Janet rejoined, with a little air of superior wisdom which she sometimes assumed, and which never failed to amuse Guido intensely. He asked, after a pause:

“It’s not because Egon is German, is it?”

“Goodness, no,” said Janet, with decision. “Wesendonck is a German and such a pro that he ought to be taken out at sunrise and shot. Still, personally, I do not mistrust him. Then there’s Otto. Otto is German if anyone is. I hate him like sixty for a week at a time, but I always trust him. Now I don’t think I would ever hate your Mr. Naughtyword, he’s so very, very charming, but neither would I trust him.”

Guido was so busy turning all this over in his mind that he forgot to answer Janet. Suddenly, under cover of a street crossing, Janet plucked lightly at Guido’s sleeve.

“You’re not angry with me, are you?” she demanded, with a gentleness so intense that it verged on tenderness. “Now are you, Guido Guidovich?”

Never before had she employed Dobronov’s mode of addressing him. Coming from her lips, the quaint Russian suffix addended to his aggressively Teutonic name assumed the grace of a caress.

Their eyes met, interlocked. Neither spoke. They were content to gaze at each other, unashamedly because innocently, and to drink deep at the bourne of each other’s souls.

After a long time Guido said with grave sweetness:

“Janet I am not angry with you. Nothing you could do or say could make me angry.”

And they went home feeling fabulously rich.

Janet’s adverse criticism of Egon, linked to Stan’s contemptuous estimate of their former classmate, carried considerable weight with Guido, not quite enough, however, to destroy the fascination which Egon exerted upon Guido. Egon belonged to a different genus, just as Cecil be-

longed to a different genus, than the boys with whom Guido usually foregathered. In both cases racial inbreeding for centuries had produced a homogeneous personality which unconsciously mirrored the summation of traditions, customs, idioms and cultural aspirations of the race from which it sprang.

Guido, with his exquisite sensibility to fine shades, felt keenly the similarities as well as the differences which linked him to and separated him from Egon. It had been the same with Cecil. It was, in less degree, the same with Dobronov. Guido felt a keen zest in the intellectual and emotional pleasure provided by the continual perception of these variations or consonances, and derived a curious mental stimulation from this perception even at such times when the pleasure which it gave turned to pain. As it did, not infrequently.

He had forgotten his resolution to see nothing of Egon on moral grounds. One objection he had to presenting himself at Egon's rooms. He feared that he might be enticed into a serious quarrel touching the War.

His fears were without foundation. The young men whom he had been invited to meet belonged, with one exception, to the same type as Egon. *Leutnant zur See* Horwitz, who had been incapacitated in antebellum days by an explosion which had torn away his left leg, and *Herr Baron* Trommer, a delicate youth with a blonde mustache and watery blue eyes who, as Egon explained in the course of the evening, was also a *Militaerkrueppel*, both wore the same half-bored, half-insolent expression which appeared on the boyish face of Egon. Both were considerably older than their host. Horwitz was a man of at least thirty, Trommer was twenty-four or twenty-five.

They spoke very rapidly, and their intonation and accent, their very phraseology and diction were quite different from those employed by German-Americans. They were the finished, highly polished product of their own civilization.

They were playing pinochle when Guido arrived, and the game was continued after Egon had introduced his friends to Guido, Egon saying that they would finish the game and then stop.

The remaining guest, whom Egon introduced as plain

Herr Redlich, and who seemed to be engaged by some silk house as salesman, differed widely from his host and the other two guests. He was quite as German as they, spoke in the same quick, restless way as the others, and like them used superlatives in preference to plain adjectives. Everything was *kollosal*, *riesig*, *enorm* or *winzig*, *rasend*, *wuetend*. Guido wondered parenthetically whether this habit of lingual exaggeration had led to the tremendous overestimation of the German nation by itself, or whether lack of sobriety in appraising themselves had led to this inebriety of language. In some respects Redlich reminded him of Wesendonck, but he lacked Wesendonck's offensive and ubiquitous egoism. Wherein he differed saliently from host and his host's other German guests was in a certain wholesomeness which he radiated. There was about him something clean and direct and honest which reminded Guido of Otto.

The young men talked while they finished their game. They talked well. They talked authoritatively. They talked like men of the world. The substance of their talk embraced many subjects. Finally it alighted on horses and women. The incapacitated *Leutnant zur See*, if his reports were true, had had innumerable *pikante Abendteuer zu Land*, and he related these with such delicacy of allusion and such humorous touches that Guido joined in the convulsive laughter of the others, even though he was shocked by the immorality of the "adventures" which Horwitz narrated so dispassionately. When Horwitz finished, the blonde young Baron began relating spicy reminiscences of his misspent youth. He was not as good a raconteur as the lieutenant, and he lacked the lieutenant's polished wit and humor and art of allusion. Very quickly he lapsed into vulgarity of language and indecency of thought. His immoralities appeared shameless and repulsive. He concluded with the announcement of a smoker to which he had been so fortunate as to procure six tickets, and he asked the four young men present to accept four of the six tickets at his disposal.

Egon and Horwitz accepted, a strange gleam in their eyes. Redlich refused, not very courteously. A taciturn look of disapproval in Redlich's eyes decided Guido to follow his example and to decline the invitation. The

Baron pressed him to accept. Unexpectedly Egon put in his oar.

"Von Estritz is right in declining your ticket," he said. "Your naughty smokers are no place for an American. We Germans are such unregenerate, godless miscreants that we can stand that sort of entertainment. But von Estritz, to expiate the sin of having attended such a pandemonium, would shave his head and wander barefoot from house to house with a begging bowl in his hand. Leave the prudish little American alone."

Guido tingled with resentment. Strange vanities to which the human heart offers a refuge! He was genuinely disgusted and distressed. He had not the least desire in the world to attend this smoker, which, he could not doubt, offered some objectionable sort of entertainment. But Egon's words conveyed a challenge. Vanity was being scraped on the raw. He felt as if his honor, that vapory, squeamish thing of European make, required him to accept the challenge and the ticket. And yet, desperately, he did not want to go.

Something curious happened. His memory flew back to the kiss which *Frau Theaterdirektor* had placed upon his lips. He felt no pride in it, as in an unrepentent moment, he had thought he might feel upon just such an occasion. But he thought of it. He tried to dismiss the thought of it, but it pursued him, enmeshed him, permeated him. And it whipped at something within him that was lethargic and dormant, whipped and lashed and bashed at it until he felt a sudden violent, wicked desire to accept the invitation, and go with these young men and live the life they lived.

And all the while the kiss which an unscrupulous woman had placed upon the boy's lips seemed to hover there, like a very real and palpable thing, like a thing which might become strong and permanent, as if the moral atmosphere which surrounded him was particularly favorable to a flower of such sinister bloom.

Redlich's face had turned very red during Egon's peroration.

"I really do not see why you should smirch your own nation," he said, quite angrily. "Our enemies are saying enough bad things about us. You chaps may be proud

of your immorality, but my parents brought up myself and my eight brothers and sisters to do right, to fear God and obey the commandments."

"Hear! Hear!" shouted Horwitz.

"My dear Redlich," the Baron drawled. "Your family is in a class by itself. Don't pay any attention to him, Herr von Estritz. He's the most disgusting snob on earth. Listen to us and enjoy life. Listen to him and—what is it your countrymen say? 'Be good and you'll be lonely.'"

"Leave von Estritz alone, I tell you," Egon said again, and again Guido tingled with resentment and wounded self-love.

"Well," Horwitz remarked, "I thank God my father was a man of the world. On my sixteenth birthday, he called me to his room in the evening, and we had a long talk. In that talk he did not enjoin me to observe the Seventh Commandment. On the contrary. He apprised me that in all civilized communities the Seventh Commandment is more honored in the breach than the observance. At least by men. It was framed for women, not for the stronger sex. And he furnished me with quite a liberal allowance wherewith to honor the breach."

Egon and von Trommer roared with laughter, but Redlich angrily pushed his chair away from the table.

"This sort of talk, Herr Leutnant," he said, furiously, "is unseemly. Most unseemly for a Christian."

"But not for a gentleman, my dear fellow," said the *Leutnant*, with imperturbable good humor.

"Is that a reflection——"

"On your family? Heavens, no." Horwitz laughed easily, insolently. "My dear von Estritz, Redlich here, if he wished, or rather if his forbears had wished, might be a Count and rank us all. That's what he is aching to tell you. That's what I meant before when I called him a disgusting snob. For five generations past his grandfathers and great-grandfathers and great-great-grandfathers have refused a patent of nobility. And the entire Redlich family is so damnably proud of it that there is no living with them. You, however, being *adelig*, ought to have more sense and be free from middle-class scruples."

"I imagine," Guido retorted, quietly, "that I understand Herr Redlich and his middle-class scruples far better than

I do your noble elevation above middle-class scruples and morality. Also it may interest you to know that, because I am an American, I have in the past experienced considerable scruples as to my right to retain the "von" before my name. But the name, as it stands, was born so honorably by my father and my grandfather that I hesitate to shed the "von" because I fear to destroy the identity of my name. My grandfather was an *Achtundvierziger*. I am proud of that—but not because I am *adelig*."

For a moment dead silence reigned. Then Egon, the Baron and Horwitz burst out laughing.

"My dear fellow," Horwitz cried at last, "you are not really proud of having a grandfather who was a revolutionist?"

Guido bowed stiffly, coldly.

"My son," Horwitz said, with a sort of bloated arrogance, "attend and learn. If the revolution of Forty-Eight had been successful, it would have been a mighty catastrophe for Germany. Germany was then not ready for constitutional government. Germany is not ready for it to-day. The German people are the most immature people on earth politically. Bismarck understood this when he predicted that the new Germany must be forged together with blood and iron. See what Germany is to-day—the mightiest empire on earth, and please God, that empire shall be mightier and greater still when the War is over."

There was no levity in his voice now. Egon and the Baron also had sobered down. They and men of their kidney might ridicule morality and Christianity and the traditions of the home. But the Fatherland was immune; the Fatherland was sacred; the Fatherland must be revered and honored. The curious condition of mind thus revealed came as a shock to Guido.

"It seems to me," Guido replied, "that you are maligning your country and your race in taking that position, because in taking it you assume that hatred and greed of conquest—unworthy motives—alone were able to accomplish the task of unifying the continually bickering German states, while worthier motives, such as an honest desire for national freedom and racial unity would have been incapable of achieving the same end. That, gentlemen, sounds very

odd to American ears. Territorial aggrandizement, as a reason for going to war, is taboo in my country."

Guido expected an outbreak on the Wesendonck style. Nothing of the sort, however, occurred. Egon laughed and the Baron said, in comically compressed English, "Now will we be good?" Redlich looked startled and pained. The crippled *Leutnant zur See*, upon whom the defense thus evolved, said, after a moment's lingering over his cigar:

"My dear chap, you Americans are incorrigible idealists."

"Idealists!" Guido exclaimed in astonishment. "We are accustomed to be called dollar-chasers by the Germans and by the German press."

"Germans? German-Americans I presume you mean. Mere mongrels. Mongrels, my dear sir, who have thrown away their birthright as Teutons for the sake of their bread and butter. Do you really think that Germany cares a rap about German-American opinion? I refer you to von Bernstorff's reply to Senator Phelan, of California, at the time of the California Exposition. Phelan urged von Bernstorff, then the incumbent of some imperial office in Berlin, to consider the desirability of Germany's being represented on a large scale at the Exposition. 'This,' said the Senator, 'would mightily please the German-Americans.' Von Bernstorff replied that Germans despised German-Americans and regarded them as outlaws and pariahs. I have it from von Bernstorff himself."

"And does the loyalty to the Fatherland which the German-Americans are evincing throughout the country count for nothing in German eyes?" Guido demanded.

"It remains to be seen whether it is loyalty or pseudo-loyalty," Horwitz replied significantly. Guido did not comprehend the words. He asked for an elucidation. Horwitz and Egon exchanged rapid glances. Redlich's eyes had dropped to his hands. He was frowning quite furiously.

Horwitz leaned forward toward Guido.

"*Lieber von Estritz*," he said, "lip-service is the easiest service in the world to render. In case of war between the United States and Germany—would the German-Americans be loyal to their blood or to their country?"

Guido stared, too bewildered for speech.

✓ "I will answer my own question," Horwitz continued. "They will in the end be loyal to their blood. War between the two countries will regenerate the Germans on American soil. It cannot be otherwise. They will regain the birthright which they have sold for a mess of pottage. You, too, von Estritz. You, too."

"Sir!" Guido was on his feet, indignant, red, hot, amazed, yet, for some occult reason, not angry. Curiosity held anger in leash.

"It does not follow, you know," said Horwitz, "that because Germany was wrong in the Sixties and in Seventy-one she is wrong now. She is right. Americans refuse to believe that we found conclusive proofs in the archives at Brussels that England was planning to invade Germany. It is true nevertheless. My brother is in Brussels now. I have it direct from him. Do not misunderstand me. I do not blame England. No educated German blames England. Why should we? England is trying to hold her own—we are trying to obtain our own. Where is the difference? If there is a difference, it is too subtle for comprehension by myself.

"The entire question, *mein lieber von Estritz*," Horwitz continued with ever-increasing fervor, "is which culture do you prefer, German or English? You are American-born. Yet you speak German like a native. The traditions which your parents brought from beyond the seas must be dearer to you, having come to you as your heritage, than the superficial sheath of acquired Anglo-Saxon culture with which America is veneered. It is unthinkable that it should be otherwise."

Guido said nothing. What he was hearing was too preposterous to be dealt with at a moment's notice.

"You blamed Germany a moment ago," Horwitz continued, "for allowing herself to be swayed by material motives instead of by idealistic ones. Germany was once a nation of idealists and dreamers. What happened to us during the Napoleonic wars? That era was the hey-dey of German idealism. To what pass did it bring us? Degradation and shame unutterable. No, my friend, we leave idealism to America. You are thriving upon it now. Why shouldn't you? You are rich in land beyond the dreams of empire, rich in money beyond the dreams of

avarice. Is it fair to blame us, who are desperately in need of land, for not allowing our prosperous neighbor, Albion, to monopolize the entire world? You wouldn't do it yourselves, if you were situated as we are. Why, then, blame us? The millionaire, owning a large park and a fine mansion, may despise the grubby upstart who plans to procure a little of the world's wealth while he, the millionaire, peruses Emerson and Thoreau and Ruskin. But the day may come when the idealist shall rue him his idealism, and the man possessing a healthy ego may yet sit at table in the mansion that erstwhile belonged to the millionaire idealist."

Horwitz's voice had assumed a sinister ring. Guido did not misunderstand it.

"If you come into conflict with us," he said, "believe me—it is you who will do the ruing—not we. We have never been beaten yet. We never shall be beaten. And I will tell you why. *Because we never go to war unless we are morally right.* And that is more than can be said of Germany."

Horwitz laughed grimly, insolently.

"And was Germany beaten in 1864? or in 1866? or in 1871?" he inquired, sardonically.

Guido was aghast.

"You do not even pretend to have been right in those wars?"

"My dear fellow—among ourselves?" Horwitz laughed amusedly. "Is the pickerel or the mackerel or the carp morally right when he opens his mouth and swallows half a dozen minnows for his breakfast? Survival of the fittest. That slogan originated in England, the home of many good things, but it remains for us Germans to show the world the true meaning of the phrase. Germany is invincible because she is fittest. And therefore, von Estritz, think well over all I have told you."

"I wonder," said Guido with fine irony, "that having dispensed with the moral necessity of proving yourselves right in previous wars, you take the trouble to prove yourselves right in this one."

Horwitz smiled with the utmost good-nature.

"We didn't take the trouble," he said. "Destiny, fate took the trouble for us. If she hadn't, do you think I

would care? We are not liars, we Germans. We do not wrap ourselves around with hypocritical idealism and cant. That is why you may trust and believe us when we tell you our culture is superior to that produced by any other race. And thereupon rests the fundamental justice of our military excursions in this War. Even if we had been as wrong as we happen to be right in prosecuting the War as we are doing, and as we have done, and as we shall do, that one inalterable, indubitable fact would wipe away minor wrongs and breaches of faith—our culture is the best and the greatest in the world, and it behooves us to spread it peaceably if we can, by the sword if he must. Some day pride of race will awaken in you, and you will understand in a flash things that now seem dark and incomprehensible. It is inevitable. As you grow older, the cheap claptrap of democratic ideals will cease to appeal to you, and you will realize that the Anglo-Saxon cry for majority rule is essentially immoral because the majority represents the mob, and the men returned at your elections by the majority can therefore impossibly represent the best brains and the best blood of the nation, especially a nation of mongrels, like the United States."

Guido breathed hard and fast. The insult to his country stung like a lash. He did not trust himself to speak. He was bewildered, too. He glanced at Redlich, but Redlich, greatly as he disapproved of Horwitz's private morality, was evidently in entire accord with his political convictions.

"I would not have you think," Horwitz continued, "that we Germans believe it is right to disregard the necessities of the lower classes. It is safe to say that in no country of the world does the workingman enjoy such security—such an assurance that he will be taken care of in his old age or in case of disablement."

Guido had pulled himself together by this time. In a flash, as Horwitz had predicted, "things that seemed dark and incomprehensible had been made clear to him," but not in the way in which Horwitz had hoped.

"I know nothing about Germany's working classes," he said. "I do know that the American working man is pretty well to do. He earns living wages, has his savings account and his small investments and frequently owns his own home."

"And I want to protest," Guido continued, quickly, without giving Horwitz a chance to say something, "against your expression 'A nation of mongrels.' We are a hybrid nation—that is true. But Americans believe that therein lies our strength and the security of our future. We believe that for reasons which you, *Herr Leutnant*, imagine, are incapable of comprehending though I argued from now until doomsday, for the simple reason that, being a modern German you, according to your own account, worship the Golden Calf of Material Prosperity."

Guido had purposely allowed a note of insolence to creep into his voice and had the satisfaction of seeing Horwitz ruffled for the first time. He flushed, but at a half-smothered ejaculation from Egon, checked an angry retort.

"We believe in idealism, of course, Herr von Estritz," said the Baron, "but we do not believe in the fatuous methods of the impracticable dreamer in furthering that idealism."

Guido's lips curled disdainfully. He ignored the Baron entirely. He had something more to say in reply to Horwitz's tirade against Anglo-Saxon methods, and he had no intention of allowing himself to be side-tracked.

"I would like to correct another misapprehension of yours, *Herr Leutnant*," he continued. "Intelligent Americans in every age have of course not been unmindful of the danger of which you speak—that the mob spirit may inject itself into our government to a pernicious degree.

"This was particularly true of those men who were the founders of our nation. And I should like to quote a few of their sayings in English to illustrate my point. If you will permit——"

Horwitz bowed stiffly. A formidable look came into his eyes.

"I am aware, of course," he said, acidly, "that this country was exceptionally fortunate in the men who flourished in the era immediately preceding and following the Revolutionary War. I am willing to admit that in no era of the world's history has so great a number of men of undoubted political genius been gathered together as in that age in America. I will go even further than that. The fathers of your country were inspired. In no other

way can the wisdom which they displayed in the framing of your Constitution be explained."

Guido smiled.

"They were Anglo-Saxons, every one of them," he said, a little maliciously. "And I deny emphatically that they were inspired."

A murmur of amazement sprang to the lips of Guido's small audience.

"They were remarkably intelligent men, no doubt," Guido continued, pleasantly. "When I went to school I, like yourselves, believed that they must have been inspired. Since leaving school I have read a detailed account of the four months which preceded the adoption of our present Constitution. May I ask—are you familiar with the history of those four months?"

Horwitz replied, looking somewhat blank, that he was not.

"It taught me two things," said Guido. "It taught me that those men were not inspired, as I had once believed. It taught me also the tremendous importance of the apparently mediocre mind in checking the more headlong, brilliant mind. In brief, gentlemen, the history of those months and the achievements of those four months completely vindicates the 'cheap clap-trap of democratic ideals.'"

Guido had the satisfaction of seeing Horwitz look perplexed.

"Are you not slightly inconsistent?" he asked. "A moment ago you admitted that leaders of American thought recognized the dangers of mob rule."

"Well, I didn't put it just that way," said Guido, laughing, "but let it pass. It was Hamilton, gentlemen, who one day in an after-dinner bout with Jefferson exclaimed angrily, 'Your people, sir, your people is a great beast!'"

"Good for Hamilton," Horwitz said, heartily.

"But then," said Guido, "Hamilton was so ingrained a patrician that he would have made the father of Frederick the Great look like a green grocer."

"I consider it quite unnecessary to animadvert upon the earlier Hohenzollern. No one denies that they were lamentably lacking in breeding and education," Horwitz retorted, almost angrily, and Guido had the satisfaction of feeling that at last he had drawn blood.

Guido continued:

"It was John Adams, gentlemen, who said: 'All men are men, and not angels—men, and not lions—men, and not whales—men, and not eagles—that is, they are all of the same species and this is the most that the equality of men amounts to. A physical inequality, an intellectual inequality of the most serious kind is established by the Author of all nature; and society has a right to establish any other inequality it may judge necessary for its good. The precept, however, implies an equality which is the real equality of nature and of Christianity.'"

"That is good common sense," Horwitz assented, heartily, "and in Germany, more than in any other country of the world, including your own, both the difference and the equality existing between men is well provided for."

"Yet you deprive the German people of the privilege of equal representations. You disapprove of parliamentary government. You provide old-age pensions and working-men's associations, and in return for those and similar benefits you keep the people in political bondage. And are the German people really sunk so deep in materialism and love of physical comfort that they reck as nought their heritage as freemen, as nought their privilege and duty as freemen to help shape the destinies of their nation? Are they really willing to barter the heritage of freemen in return for widows' pensions and cheap servants and inexpensive fiacres and opera tickets?"

"Upon my word," Horwitz retorted, with a frown, "you have a remarkable way of putting things, my American friend."

"At the risk of boring you," Guido continued, "I would like to quote from yet another founder of the Republic. John Cabot, one of the 'highbrow' Federalists of Massachusetts, in the first year of the nineteenth century remarked: 'There is no security for good government without some popular mixture in it, but there will be neither justice nor stability in any system if some material parts of it are not independent of popular control.'"

"Why," Horwitz cried, applaudingly, "a German might have said that! You know the socialists have quite a good deal to say in the German Empire, and they are nothing if not popular."

"But the Kaiser has the sole right to decide upon matters pertaining to the army and navy—through Prussia's domination," Guido commented.

Horwitz shrugged his shoulders.

"We, on the other hand, leave those matters to Congress and the President. That means that when the last is said the people have a voice in deciding."

"I don't see how," Horwitz demanded.

"In this way," Guido replied. "A president who keeps his finger unerringly on the pulse of the public may be in danger of being called a politician. But he's really doing what he ought to do. He's focussing the popular will and acting in accordance with it to the best of his knowledge and ability. That's what Mr. Wilson is doing. Personally, I wish he had declared war when Belgium was invaded, but the country didn't want war. People at large didn't see it that way. They thought it was just another one of your unending European wars."

"Well, and isn't it?" Egon demanded.

"Is it?" Guido flung back. "Until this evening I did not believe that the German people at large in going to war were motivated by the militaristic spirit. I thought they were willing to follow their leaders into war because they were in a blue funk about that ridiculous yarn concerning a conspiracy instigated by England to dismember Germany. But from what I have heard to-night—well, I'm wondering, that's all."

"I am anxious to hear what part of your government is not subject to mob rule, beg pardon, popular control," Horwitz remarked.

"Our judiciary," Guido replied. "Our Supreme Bench. Our Federal Courts. It would be intolerable to American ideas to link the legislative or administrative powers and the judicial functions of government together as you do in some instances."

Horwitz and Egon exchanged rapid glances.

"You are very well informed, von Estritz," Horwitz said. "At present you are completely dominated by the glittering tinsel of the Anglo-Saxon's gift of brilliant hypocrisy. But we hope to save you. You are worth saving."

"Saving?"

"Saving. You are no shallow thinker. But your thoughts have been directed into pernicious channels by the superficial education of the American public school. I repeat my prophecy, some day you will come over to us, bag and baggage and scrip and scrippage."

Needless to say, Guido repeated this conversation verbatim as nearly as memory permitted to Otto. Otto, having heard Guido out, coolly commented:

"He's right, of course. I mean about Anglo-Saxon culture. The people do not rule here any more than in Germany."

"And about German-Americans being pariahs and out-laws?"

"I don't believe von Bernstorff ever said it," said Otto, in his most magnificently dogmatic manner.

Guido gave it up. Honest arguments lost their virtue when presented to a mind which believed what it chose to believe but relegated whatever did not happen to fall in with its own viewpoint to the realm of "lies."

The unsatisfactory conclusion of this talk with Otto was a thorn in Guido's memory, and there is small doubt that he would have come back to the subject, and probably quarreled violently with Otto, if something had not occurred which was destined to reduce everything—even the war—excepting only itself to utterly negligible proportions. Life was preparing to harrow Guido—to tease, to torment, to castigate, to browbeat, to flaunt and to exalt him; to make a plaything of him and to give him the onerous choice of turning himself into a rascal or a hero. It was preparing for the lad the most significantly intimate ordeal of which it is capable. Guido stood upon the threshold of the most inexorable experience of life, the experience which in some form or other is spared none, and which, by an immutable and somewhat baffling law—since its wide diffusion tends at first glance to rob it of most of its value as a formative factor in the individual life—is charged with a sinister power to make or to mar, to act upon the character which it assails either constructively or destructively, to finely temper, or to grossly deface.

It was not upon love's threshold that our hero stood, for in love is always hedged about with something of divinity, which some quality of delicate inevitableness, with a rich

sense of supermundane authority. It was upon the threshold of love's pernicious counterfeit that he stood, a counterfeit sparkingly bejeweled, ornately embellished, splendidly caparisoned, full of gracious accents, and boasting of the investiture of many aromatic seductions and plausible delights. Yet, for all that, a counterfeit and a cheat, and its name—if this were an enigma—might be described as being similar to the name of the holy prototype of which it is a tawdry travesty in that it is a monosyllable and has the same initial; dissimilar in that harsh sybilant and unlovely guttural take the place of the sweet dove sounds which inhabit the sacred thing it would profane by its brazen masquerade.



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